Annual School Report 2007

Vision Statement

As a Catholic School we aim to provide a caring and Catholic environment which proclaims the teachings of our faith, and thus, enables our students to make positive contributions to our ever changing society.

Principal’s Message

St Joseph’s Catholic High School underwent an external school review in 2007 and an extensive audit of facilities and technology in the school.

The report strongly endorsed the Religious, educational, administrative and pastoral policies and procedures in the school.

The highlights of the year included an emphasis on the traditions of the school where Catholic community and student engagement were fostered and strengthened.

Curriculum initiatives included an emphasis on assessment policy and procedures development, student information technologies in the classroom, curriculum differentiation and reform of structures for students with special needs.

Development of student learning, as witnessed in improvements in external examination results in 2007, was an endorsement of further developments in inquiry based learning and independent learning.

Parent Involvement

The strength of the Parents’ involvement and contribution to the school is underpinned by the perspective of “parents as partners”.

Parents fill many roles around the school such as canteen duty, exam supervision, running school tours, the uniform shop and involvement in the School Musicals and rock eisteddfods. The school’s community strength is very much underpinned by such parental involvement.

The organisation of parent welcome nights, the Cultural Expo and social events and well attended Parent and Friends’ Association meetings also demonstrate the way in which parents are prepared to be involved in the school in their efforts to support their children’s education.

The contribution of significant funding from the Parents is a feature of parents’ support of the school. The building of the school gymnasium epitomises the role of the Parents and Friends’ Association in supporting the development of facilities and subsequently improving the educational opportunities for the children at St Joseph’s.

Student Leadership

Student leadership also gained momentum in 2007. Students played an important role in the leadership of social justice activities.

The Student Representative Council was active in numerous initiatives including the planning of social justice initiatives such as St Joseph’s Day in March, the Art and Culture Expo in May, trivia nights and socials.

Social Justice is a fundamental element of student culture at St Joseph’s. It is what the students want to be known for and what has inspired students to work for the good of the community.

Fundraising events have included Project Compassion, Caritas, St Vincents’ Winter and Christmas Appeals, the walkathon, Operation Smile Vietnam and Father Chris Riley’s Youth off the Streets, the sponsorship of our guide dog “Joey” and Jeans for Jeans Day.
School Profile

St. Joseph’s Catholic High was established in 1982 to serve the parishes of Albion Park, Dapto, Shellharbour, Warilla and Kiama. It is a 6 stream systemic, co-educational high school. The drawing area’s population is diverse both in socio-economic structure and demographic location ranging from farming to coastal centres to newer urban areas.

As a Catholic school serving a large area of southern Illawarra, St Joseph’s enjoys a rich multicultural background, including Spanish, Maltese, Italian, Macedonian and Greek influences.

Our school motto, ‘Act Justly’, influences every aspect of daily life and there is a strong focus on social justice. The religious dimension of our school environment is expressed through the celebration of Christian values in word and sacrament. Liturgy and prayer are fundamental to St Joseph’s strong sense of community. The students’ spiritual development is a shared responsibility of Parish Priests, Principal, staff and students.

The support of our Parish priests including Father Caterall in Albion Park, Father Jones and Father Davies in Shellharbour City, Father James in Kiama, Father Dowdell in Port Kembla, Father OKeefe in Unanderra and Father Reinberger in Dapto is an important focus of our school with the link between St Joseph’s and the parishes from our drawing areas. We are also privileged to have Fr. Honorio as our school chaplain supporting our faith and pastoral development within the school.

Student Attendance Rate for 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>90.1</td>
<td>89.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Enrolments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>950</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Staffing Profile

In 2007, St Joseph’s Catholic High School employed the equivalent of 67 full time teachers. In reality, we have a teaching staff of 71, but this number comprised of a number of part-time positions and job share arrangements.

The staff at St Joseph’s is comprised of the Principal, Assistant Principal, Religious Education Coordinator, twenty-two other coordinators, a teacher librarian and forty-five classroom teachers. The coordinators have specific responsibility for Key Learning Areas, such as English, or for a specific cohort of students, year 10, for example. Supporting these coordinators we also have a Curriculum, Administration and two Pastoral Care Coordinators. Other areas of special responsibility include Liturgy, Careers, Sport and Special Needs. The mission of the school is supported by a large number of full or part-time staff. The school currently employs 7 support staff working in Administrative duties within the school office, 12 Special Needs, Library, Science and TAS assistants support the school’s teaching staff. 12 Groundsman, cleaning staff, canteen assistants and uniform shop assistants also provide for an efficient and effective running of the school.

The teaching staff at St Joseph’s is very experienced:

- 32 (45%) Staff have been teaching for 20 years or more.
- 20 (28%) Staff have been teaching for 10 - 19 years
- 19 (27%) Staff have been teaching for 1-9 years

All teaching staff have acquired qualifications from a higher education institution. Many have demonstrated their commitment to learning by continuing to be learners themselves. This is evidenced by the large number of teachers who attend in-service and professional learning programs, as well as those who have acquired post-graduate qualifications since beginning their teaching careers.

Currently 73% of the teaching staff have post-graduate qualifications. These qualifications
range from a Diploma of Education, to a Certificate in Religious Education to a Master’s Degree.

In 2007 St Joseph’s had a staff retention rate of 96%.

Professional learning involved a wide range of programs and all staff participated at varying stages of the year. Programs were as varied as Technology courses, preparation for senior retreat programs, myclasses and teachnology projects, information technology conferences, leadership conferences, syllabus implementation, occupational health and safety training through to teachers working to develop systems and processes to enhance the learning environments of students.

**Teacher Standards**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification 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>96%</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>4%</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

The average daily staff attendance rate for 2007 was 96.02%.

School based expenditure on professional learning in 2007 was $18,147. This is in addition to expenditure on professional learning opportunities provided by the Catholic Education Office.

**Culture of the Catholic School**

The Mission Statement of St Joseph’s states that the Core Values are:
- the sense of community
- an underlying Christian spiritual dimension of school culture
- the dignity of each individual
- the empowering of students to develop their full potential and play a constructive role in the modern world

This Mission was achieved through a good general education, which is verified by the Higher School Certificate and the School Certificate results in 2007, both of which were commendable. More especially the Mission Statement was achieved through the many other aspects of life at St Joseph’s.

**Emphasis on Prayer**

Prayer is an important part of life at the school, and this is evidenced by morning prayer over the Public Address system, through liturgies which occurred for special occasions like: the Mass to welcome the new Year 7 students, the Liturgy for the opening of the school year, the celebration for the Feast of St Joseph, the Ash Wednesday Liturgy, the Easter Liturgy, the Sorry Day Liturgy, the Liturgy for Remembrance Day, the Masses for the end of Years 12 and 10, and the Giving Mass at the end of the year. Also each week a home room joined the Parish to celebrate Mass in the Parish Church.

**Social Justice**

There has been a strong emphasis on working for Social Justice at St Joseph’s. All the proceeds from student socials were passed on to charitable organisations. The school had its annual walkathon, the proceeds of which were shared between the Carmelite Missionaries in East Timor, Smile in Vietnam and Caritas. The St Vincent de Paul Society were provided with a truck load full of hampers for the needy at Christmas and there were other activities which made the students more aware of the needs of those less fortunate than ourselves.

**Environmental Awareness**

The school has a strong awareness of the need to be environmentally caring and that environmental consciousness is a social justice issue. Students are invited to care for the school environment and they are also asked to be aware of the environment outside the
school perimeter. Regular work was done by the students to beautify the school and to work for the good of creation.

**Mutual support**

Staff and students, as a general rule, are supportive of each other and the supportive attitude highlights the Catholic Culture.

**Student Welfare**

The pastoral care programs implemented in 2007 emphasised the promotion of mutual respect, tolerance and the acceptance of each individual.

The team focus adopted in the school to pastoral care was reinforced by the external school review which took place in May, 2007. The review concluded that such a team approach was a key factor in the strength of pastoral programs within the school.

The provision of two pastoral coordinators overseeing the work of the year coordinators encouraged a team approach to the suite of pastoral programs implemented. The continuation of a structure which encourages year coordinators to progress with the cohort of students each year allows for the implementation of an effective case management approach to student behaviour.

The pastoral needs of students are very much met by this team of pastoral care coordinators and year coordinators, who work very closely with the school counsellors to provide support for students in the classroom by liaising with the teaching staff. The team offers assistance in the areas of mediation, organisation, conflict resolution, self esteem and anger management.

The school structures adopted to coordinate behavioural management include regular year team meetings of staff, the monitoring of student progress through diary checks, regular pastoral meetings of the pastoral staff of the school and fortnightly meetings between the Assistant Principal and the Pastoral Care Coordinators. A case management approach is taken by the school which is supported by regular meetings between the Principal, Pastoral Care Coordinators and counsellors and a Board of review which meets regularly with students who require assistance. The merit system, principal morning teas and picnics towards the end of the year are some of the processes in place to reward positive behaviours.

Counselling for students is provided by Centacare which provides us with the services of two counsellors for four days each week. Students may be referred by parents or through the pastoral team, and, in some cases, students will self refer. Students present with a range of issues which include anxiety, coping with change, grief and loss, depression and relationships.

One of the pastoral priorities in place in 2007 was to reach out to more individuals through group work. Our Centacare Counsellors assist the teaching staff in the running of programs such as Rock and water, seasons For Growth, Talk Sense To Yourself, and Peer Support.

This year boys and girls groups in Stage 4 and 5 have been another focus of pastoral programs. Boys are catered for through the Buoyed Up program which uses the Rock and Water program as its basis, addressing aggression, self esteem, bullying and emotional learning amongst boys. Another focus of this program is using a mentoring program to address boys who are underachieving.

Girls’ groups formed in Stages 4 and 5 address self esteem, attitude and behaviour amongst the girls. These groups have had considerable success in addressing performance and behaviour in 2007.

These groups build resilience, target self esteem, group interaction and build skills in goal setting and work organisation. They provide students with the necessary help to develop motivation skills in order for students to achieve their potential.

A particular focus in 2007 was the emphasis on cyber bullying and appropriate use of the internet. The school has held forums for parents, invited the police to address our students at assembly, made internet use and cyberbullying focus areas at retreats, year meetings and work across the curriculum.

The purpose of all these programs is to develop in our students the confidence and resilience to better handle the difficult aspects of their lives and to assist them in reaching their potential both academic and emotional.

**Parent, Student & Teacher Satisfaction**

In surveys conducted in 2007 students generally expressed pride and a positive attitude to their school experiences. 92% were proud to attend a Catholic school where some 85% believed school helped them with their
Catholic faith. 86% of respondents found class work challenging and believed that their teachers supported their learning.

Parent respondents believed that the religious and pastoral needs of the students were being met by the school. (95%). There was similar support that their child’s learning needs were being met by the school (96%). Whilst 90% of parents surveyed believed their child’s progress was adequately being reported to parents, 10% of respondents expressed some dissatisfaction about current reporting formats. This concern was also picked up in staff surveys.

Parents agreed strongly that the school provided an extensive and appropriate extracurricular program for students (98%) and a similar number believed the school prepared students for life after school (97%).

Whilst staff felt strongly that the school challenged students to maximise their learning (89%), some 17% of staff felt that the school could do more to provide more appropriate information to parents about student progress.

94% of staff agreed that the school provides a safe, supportive and Christian environment for the students.

83% of staff believed that the school met the diverse learning needs of students. With 17% believing that the school could address the diversity of students needs being met more thoroughly, the school does need to include this area in its planning for 2008.

Financial Summary

Of the $439921.90 carried forward $58,425 is for loan repayments from December 2007, leaving a balance of $381,496.20.

Our Parents and Friends Association, following a decision to commit to the building of a gymnasium for $330,000 over 10 years, provided another $140,000 towards the projects’ total cost of $690,000 in 2007.

The following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for St Joseph’s Catholic High 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

In 2007 St Joseph’s participated in the mandatory School Review. In relation to learning and teaching, the curriculum management team involved itself in preparations for what was to be a very successful experience. The review provided significant feedback to allow relevant future planning. A continuation of priorities such as differentiating the curriculum was evident through committees such as learning and Teaching, INTEL, Gifted and Talented, Learning Technologies and Special needs.
Curriculum and Pedagogy

Throughout the year the KLA management team reviewed the practices that linked, more effectively, teaching programmes with assessment and reporting practices. This review led to amendments to existing assessment policy and the move to an improved reporting system. Through 2008 it anticipated that a reporting system that meets the needs of the whole community will be sourced for implementation in 2009.

The practice of making grade distribution tables available to parents at the end of reporting periods continued with the view to complete an internal analysis of results to help inform learning and teaching practices in stages 4 & 5. A continuation of data analysis of HSC and SC also continued.

The KLA co-ordinators worked on developing professional development plans for their staff. This was supported through the KLA meeting structure where co-ordinators acted as “buddies” for other co-ordinators and provided professional readings at co-ordinator meetings which supported the theme of “Developing Passionate Learners”.

The Gifted and Talented program developed into its second year as a result of planning in 2006. In 2007 staff were further inserviced in curriculum differentiation. Staff shared adjusted learning experiences at staff meetings. A Gifted and Talented Data Base and website were introduced to support teachers in supporting students who had been identified. A “Boys Group” of underachievers was established to help encourage students in the area of goal setting and motivation. It is anticipated that this will be developed further in 2008 with a “Girls Group”.

The growth in the Special Needs area initiated changes to the support that is to be offered to the classroom teachers. Students with special needs were either supported full time in the Learning resource centre or partial support offered to classroom teachers with learning resource centre staff assisting with curriculum adjustments. Further growth in numbers of students in this area will be a cause to review the effectiveness of these practices in the future.

In the area of Vocational Education and Training, St. Joseph’s offered courses in Hospitality, Construction and Information Technology. Further opportunities in externally provided TVET course were also accessed by students in the areas of Entertainment, Fashion Visualisation, Aged Care Nursing, Automotive and Aeroskills.

The Bridge course offered between St. Joseph’s and St. Paul’s Primary School was expanded to offer greater significance. The course name was changed to INTEL and more time was given to staff to work with the year 6 and 7 students on their integrated program. Staff volunteered to be part of the program and utilised their expertise to help support the self directed learning style.

Student Achievement

The school uses a variety of assessment strategies at key points in the learning framework. State wide literacy and numeracy testing programs provide information that assist in diagnosing individual learning needs and reviewing whole school teaching programs. Results must be seen in the context of the school community. Information on student progress is communicated regularly and parents are provided with opportunities for discussion. If further information is required about student achievement, please contact the school.

Higher School Certificate

In 2007, 128 students sat for examinations in the Higher School Certificate and all students received their HSC. The results from the 2007 cohort were strong with a number of high achieving students. Student achievement was reported on a standards framework using Course Marks and Performance Bands from 1 to 6 with Band 1 (the lowest) indicating that students have not achieved the minimum standard. Student achievement in Extension Courses is reported in Performance Bands from E1 to E4.

Of the Board Developed Courses, 25 were above the state average (73.5%) and 9 subjects scored below. Performance in our 4 largest cohort subjects are as follows:

In General Mathematics there were 92 students with: 23.9 % of students achieved Bands 5 and 6 (compared with 22.5 % statewide) 0 % of students achieved Band 1 (compared with 3.6 % statewide)

In Studies of Religion 1 there were 91 students with: 41.8 % of students achieved Bands 5 and 6 (compared with 38.2 % statewide)
0% of students achieved Band 1 (compared with 0.3% statewide)

In English Standard there were 66 students with: 4.5% of students achieved Bands 5 and 6 (compared with 3.4% statewide)
0% of students achieved Band 1 (compared with 5.7% statewide)

In English Advanced there were 62 students with: 58.1% of students achieved Bands 5 and 6 (compared with 46.8 statewide)
0% of students achieved Band 1 (compared with 0.06% statewide)

**School Certificate**

In 2007, there were 159 students who received a School Certificate. Student achievement is reported as a percentage score and in Bands from 1 to 6 with Band 1 indicating that students are operating below minimum standard. Computing Skills is not reported in Bands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Mean Score %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English – Literacy</td>
<td>76.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>71.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>76.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian History, Civics &amp; Citizenship</td>
<td>72.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Geography, Civics &amp; Citizenship</td>
<td>76.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computing Skills</td>
<td>83.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Literacy and Numeracy Assessments**

The English Language and Literacy Assessment (ELLA) and the Secondary Numeracy Assessment Program (SNAP) assess students’ literacy and numeracy achievements against outcomes in the K-6 English and Mathematics syllabuses but in the context of the secondary Key Learning Areas. Student performance is reported in four bands; Low, Elementary, Proficient and High. These are

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 7 - ELLA</th>
<th>Year 7 - SNAP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td><strong>Numeracy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005: 91.9</td>
<td>2005: 80.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006: 94.15</td>
<td>2006: 79.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007: 90.3</td>
<td>2007: 72.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: National Benchmarks not included as they 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.

- Build a genuine commitment to pastoral care
- Develop the Catholic ethos of the school
- Develop the grounds and school facilities to meet learning and teaching needs
- Focus on classroom teaching

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

- The development of Stage 5 boys and girls groups focused on building resilience and time management and goal setting skills. In addition, the boys programs of Rock and Water and Buoyed Up and the resilience and self esteem building programs such Seasons For growth complemented the whole school approach to bullying and harassment through a cross curricular approach and junior retreat program emphasis. The provision of a staff relations program saw the undertaking of a Staffmatters Program in 2007
- A commitment to providing greater opportunities for the school community of Masses, liturgies and prayer has seen the addition of opportunities for students to attend masses at lunchtime in addition to homeroom Masses and year Masses and liturgies.
- The completion of the gymnasium had added much needed flexibility in the provision of an additional large learning space in the school. The Grounds Program emphasised the greening of the Cola area and work to the front of the school
- The development of classroom technologies through an emphasis on staff professional development complemented the audit and restructuring of the school technology network.

**Priorities for 2008**

- A review of Special Education to introduce structural changes to the Stage 4 programs and life skills programs across stages 4, 5 and 6
- Foster the development of a stronger Catholic culture through building links between parishes and the school with programs such as a Parish Mass Program, school community social events for parents and staff.
- Prioritise differentiated curriculum across the school in meeting the educational needs of all students. The overhaul of reporting procedures across the school and the consolidation of changes to assessment policies and procedures redrafted in 2007.
- The introduction of a comprehensive school self review process that will lead to the development of a new 5 year School Renewal Plan for St Joseph’s from 2008 to 2012
- The renewal of fencing of the school property and an alignment of K-12 Catholic education in Albion Park through a redrawing of physical boundaries.

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

Peter McGovern  
Principal