Stella Maris Catholic Parish Primary School
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Parish Priest: Rev Fr Bryan Jones
Principal: Sr Colleen Mills RSC

Annual School Report 2007

“Reverence the story of all People”

Principal’s Message

The 2007 school year at Stella Maris Catholic School has been a time of rewarding experiences, faith formation, spiritual development, quality learning and teaching within the Catholic tradition and in line with Christian values.

The children, staff and parents are challenged and reminded regularly of our Vision Statement “Reverence the Story of All People”.

At Stella Maris Catholic School we strive to work and collaborate with parents in fostering positive relationships which support child-centred learning and assist in developing the whole person.

Parent Involvement

Stella Maris is extremely fortunate to have the support from the many families who volunteer their time. In 2007 we have had many wonderful events including The Twilight Fair, Fashion Parade and fun days that included free “gifts” for the children such as Apple Slinky Day, Ice Cream Day and Watermelon Day.

Parent support extends further than fundraising with contributions made to gross motor activities, canteen, discos, reading and also to the sporting carnivals.

The year’s end saw the families of Stella Maris agree to donate $5000 from our fundraising to an orphanage in East Timor, visited by Sr Colleen, a most wonderful gesture of the generosity of our school community. The commitment of the Parents & Friends Association is to sustain a prosperous and harmonious partnership between families and staff and to encourage community spirit.

Student Leadership

Our roles as School Captains and Student Councillors of Stella Maris Catholic School began when we received our badges.

2007 has been a tiring but fantastic year for the Student Council. This year the Student Council have held an Easter Raffle and Jelly Bean Competition and participated in the ANZAC Day march and Shop for Your School.

Being School Captains and Student Councillors comes with responsibilities including: Kindergarten Duty, playground signs and setting examples for the younger students.

In conclusion 2007 has been a great year at Stella Maris Catholic School and will be remembered as such for many more years to come.

School Profile

Stella Maris Catholic School opened in May 1958, with two Sisters of Charity and 46 pupils. The school is now a co-educational two stream primary school with 339 students, administered by the Wollongong Catholic Education Office and is under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Wollongong, Peter Ingham.

As part of the All Saints Parish, Stella Maris is a community centred on the person of Christ. We endeavour to build a Christian Community where human knowledge, enlightened and enlivened by faith is shared by the Clergy, teachers, students and parents in the spirit of love and freedom.
Student Enrolments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>169</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>339</td>
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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.

Student Attendance for 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>89.8</td>
<td>91.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Staffing Profile

Staff for 2007 consisted of the Principal, Assistant Principal, Religious Education Coordinator and three stage coordinators. There are fifteen classroom teachers supported by the following specialist teachers. One Physical Education teacher, one Special Education teacher, one Reading Recovery teacher, two Executive Release teachers and one teacher/librarian. Other support staff include: School Counsellor, Senior School Support Officer and five School Support Officers.

Teaching staff at Stella Maris Catholic School currently have the following years of experience: Thirteen teachers with more than 20 years. Four teachers with 15 years or more and five teachers with between 2 - 10 years experience.

The following post graduate qualifications are held by our teaching staff.

Two teachers with Post Graduate studies in Religious Education at a Masters level or above
One teacher with Post Graduate studies in Religious Education at a Graduate Diploma Level
Five teachers with an Undergraduate diploma or degree that included Religious Education

18.5% of our total staff will be leaving the school at the end of the 2007 school year.

The average daily staff attendance rate for 2007 was 95.26%.

Throughout 2007 Stella Maris Catholic School staff members attended a variety of in services in all Key Learning Areas thus enhancing their Learning and Teaching Professionalism. Whole school development days involving all teaching staff were held during the year and these focused on Enquiry Learning.

School Support Officers have attended in services in SAS(2000) Financial and Administration, Alice and classroom support.

School based expenditure on professional learning in 2007 was $2450. This is in addition to expenditure on professional learning opportunities provided by the Catholic Education Office.

Teacher Standards

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised by AEI - NOOSR*</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia within AEI-NOOSR* guidelines but lack formal teacher qualifications</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not have qualifications as above but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Australian Education Institution – National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition
**Culture of the Catholic School**

At Stella Maris Catholic School, the school community works together to “Reverence the story of All People” focusing on Gospel Values. Our school has been staffed and led by the Sisters of Charity for 49 years and we minister in the charism of Mary Aikenhead. We form an integral part of All Saint’s Parish and work closely with our Parish Priests Fr Bryan Jones and Fr Davidanthony Davies to provide opportunities for worship, Sacraments and parish involvement. The school continues to support the Parish based Reconciliation and First Communion Partner Programs.

The Year 6 Confirmation Program is prepared and taught by the class teachers. The children participated in a Reflection Day and 44 Stella Maris school children were Confirmed. Stella Maris and Nazareth schools came together for a special Thanksgiving Mass. Stella Maris joined with Nazareth and Corpus Christi for the Parish Feast Day Masses on All Saint’s Day.

The school continues to celebrate its Catholic identity through Prayer and Liturgy. Grade liturgies are held weekly to support the Religious Education curriculum. Many liturgies have been presented this year. These have included: ANZAC Day, Refugee and Migrant Sunday, Easter, Lent, Mission, Advent and Christmas. Our school Feast Day, The Assumption was celebrated reverently with song, dance and mime. Reflective Prayer is an integral part of our day when children have the opportunity to pray using different formats and experiences. During the month of October all classes spent some time praying the Rosary.

Religion is taught daily from the Diocesan Religious Education syllabus teaching Scripture, history and tradition of our Catholic faith. Our Year 4 children were involved in the Diocesan Year 4 Religious Education Literacy Assessment task.

Throughout the year the school has been involved in many social justice programs. The Skipathon, our major fundraiser raised $3000. Children continue to be generous using mission boxes regularly. Many groups and charities including East Timor, SVDP, Caritas, and Catholic Mission have been supported. Monsignor Paul from Tanzania was a special visitor at our school. He personally thanked the children for their donations to his Parish schools in 2006. Sr Colleen Mills spent some time in East Timor and shared her experiences with the children during Mission Week.

We have extended our efforts in ecological conversion through our recycling program. The school has received a grant to install water tanks to reduce water consumption. Through class Creation Religious Education Units, students are educated about environmental issues and stewardship of God’s Planet.

**Student Welfare**

We strive to emulate the words of our school vision statement ‘Reverence the story of all people’, in the quality of pastoral care that we provide to all members of our school community.

The Pastoral Care Support group provided help to needy families through the provision of meals and visitations.

The Pastoral Care and Student Behaviour Support Committee supported with the identification of pastoral, behavioural and emotional needs of children within our school community. Our school’s Student Behaviour Management and Support Policy ensure that there is structure and consistency in dealing with issues of bullying and harassment.

Students who have difficulty in behaviour modification are supported by Individual Behaviour Management Plans where personal goals are set and worked towards.

Students who experience socialisation difficulties are given opportunities to participate in structured play activities at specified times.

Positive individual achievements and behaviours are recognised through the use of an award system which includes merit awards, gold certificates, playground and bus behaviour rewards. A cumulative house points competition rewards achievement in all areas of the school. Work of the week and class art displays highlight and recognise student’s work.

A Safe Schools Policy was developed in 2007 in conjunction with the National Safe Schools Framework. School evacuation and lockdown procedures have been practised regularly.

Healthy living initiatives have been promoted through the continued implementation of ‘Munch and Crunch’ and healthy eating advice being offered in the school newsletter.
A Centacare Counsellor provides counselling and supports the running of social skills programs: ‘Pals’ (Kindergarten), ‘Buddies’ (Kindergarten and Year 6) ‘Tools for Everyday Peacemakers’ (Year 4) ‘Hit the Ground Running’ (Year 6) and several children participated in the ‘Seasons for Growth’ program.

The student body is represented by the Student Representative Council who provide fund raising opportunities for the school. They highlight their leadership roles by articulately facilitating school assemblies.

Parents or guardians are provided opportunities to discuss issues that affect their child’s school life through the provision of parent teacher interviews.

New parents are welcomed at kindergarten orientation meetings where they are encouraged to become active members of the P&F association.

Parents are advised that Complaints and Grievances Procedures can be found on the Catholic Education Office website: www.ceo.woll.catholic.edu.au then link to Policies.

In compliance with the NSW Reform Act 1990, Corporal Punishment is banned in ALL Schools within the Diocese of Wollongong.

Access to all policies and guidelines can be obtained by contacting the school office.

Financial Summary

The Parents & Friends have had a busy and successful year holding a number of fundraising activities such as a pie drive, fashion parade and Twilight Fair and have contributed: $32,290 to Stella Maris Catholic School.

These funds have been used to purchase resources and equipment for the benefit of all students.

Our Parents & Friends Association on behalf of the parent body of Stella Maris Catholic School generously donated $5,000 to the mission in East Timor.
Learning & Teaching

The staff at Stella Maris Catholic School continues to deliver quality learning and teaching experiences for all children. All Key Learning Areas (KLAs) are taught as prescribed by the Board of Studies. In 2007 our school focus areas and initiatives have reflected our Core Learning Values and Diocesan priorities.

Curriculum & Pedagogy

The Board of Studies Syllabus statements for English, Mathematics, Human Society and Its Environment, Science and Technology, Creative Arts and Physical Education (PD/H/PE), along with the Diocese of Wollongong Religious Education Curriculum, underpin the development of the school’s curriculum. These prescribed Key Learning Areas are implemented across all four stages of learning with specialist support in Physical Education, Creative Arts and Information Communication and Learning Technology.

Staff have continued to work with Education Officers from the Catholic Education Office to reflect upon our school’s Core Values and explore how we can meet the needs of all children using an Inquiry framework for learning. Integration continues to be refined and implemented through the 2007 Learning Communities Project. This whole school initiative focused on the development of thinking skills and saw the introduction of Art Costa’s Habits of Mind. The Habits are the dispositions and behaviours that successful learners engage in, to achieve success in their learning.

During 2007 children in Years 3 and 5 completed the Basic Skills Tests in Numeracy and Literacy. Yr 4 Children also participated in the Wollongong Diocese Religious Literacy Assessment, which focused on the theme of Creation.

Information and Communication Learning Technology is integral to the learning process. Teachers continue to use myclasses to enhance learning and develop deep understanding. The integration of learning technology into a contemporary curriculum has remained a priority. In 2007 all classes received additional in class support in using technology to enhance learning outcomes through integration. The use of myclasses for collaboration of learning has continued to expand learning opportunities, with children using technology to share their learning with others across the Diocese.

Collaborative planning has continued to provide teachers with opportunities to plan and develop a comprehensive range of strategies to cater for all learning styles across each stage. Classroom teachers continue to diversify the curriculum to meet the needs of all children through the development of Individual Learning Plans (ILPs)

The teaching resource ‘Go Maths’ was introduced in Early Stage 1, Stage 1 and Stage 2 to support teachers in the development of mathematical thinking strategies. Go Maths will be introduced in Stage 3 in 2008.

Throughout 2007 Scope and Sequences for learning have been developed for each grade in all Key Learning Areas. Teachers have worked collaboratively in their Stage to develop a comprehensive learning framework that sequences learning and is in keeping with the NSW Board of Studies Syllabus Statements.

Cross-Curriculum

Indigenous Education support in 2007 continued to focus on the integration of Indigenous perspectives across all Key Learning Areas. The ‘Acknowledgement of Country’ continues at our Monday assembly. Naidoc Week celebrations included a whole school liturgy and activities that focused on developing an awareness of indigenous culture and issues. An Indigenous theme was the focus at the Southern Illawarra Catholics Schools (SICS) Stage 1 Creative Arts enrichment day, hosted by Stella Maris. Guest performers worked with the children in the areas of dance and music.

Year 6 attended the Southern Illawarra Catholic Schools Annual Young Leaders Day held at St Paul’s Albion Park. Guest speakers Andrew Daddo and Natalie Bassingthwaite explored the qualities of leadership, goal setting and self belief. The children also participated in a variety of workshops and enjoyed meeting and working with Year 6 children from other schools.

Literacy & Numeracy Week was celebrated with children’s author Margaret McAlister visiting and sharing her love of literature and conducting workshops on writing with children from Stages 2 and 3. Librarians from Shellharbour City Council also visited our school. The children were engaged in a variety of learning activities inspired by the 2007 short listed books. Whole school activities engaged all the children in a variety of Literacy learning, while Reach for the Stars numeracy
activities provided a fun aspect to the collection of mathematical data.

The second year of the Australian Schools Innovation in Science and Technology (ASISTM) Project saw the Stage 3 children collaborate with students from the University of Wollongong, Corpus Christi High School, Nazareth and St John’s Dapto Catholic Primary Schools.

**Meeting the Needs of all Students**

The Diocesan Early Literacy Assessment was implemented in Kinder and Year 1 with the information obtained through the assessment being used to inform teachers and to assist in the identification of those children needing support.

The school continued to offer support to those children identified as having special learning needs. During 2007 the school received Government Funding to support eleven children identified with special needs. Support has been provided through the development of Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) and in class support by School Support Officers working in partnership with parents and teaching staff. Daily Literacy support has also been provided in Stage 1.

Individual Education Plans (IEP) continued to be developed each term using GoalView to create, implement and evaluate student progress. A Special Education teacher worked two days each week with three part-time School Support Officers to assist the classroom teachers through in class support and small group withdrawal. Children are monitored through the Review Committee, which meets each term. As a result of these meetings teachers plan and implement Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) to ensure students with specific learning difficulties in Literacy and/or Numeracy Behavioural and/or Social Skills are meeting planned outcomes.

Reading Recovery continued in Year 1. The Program supports children experiencing difficulty in the early acquisition of literacy skills. We have six trained teachers and one Reading Recovery Support Teacher. Twenty two children have been successfully discontinued from the programme in 2007.

**Expanded Learning Opportunities**

All children from K-6 participated in the Life Education Program as a component of our Personal Development and Health program. Weekly Physical Education Lessons, continued, focussing on the development of Fundamental Motor Skills, Gymnastics, Games and Dance. This was supported by a weekly Sports Programme, which focused on game skills and participation.

A Gross Motor Programme continued for Early Stage 1 and Stage 1, with parental support in 2007. Children participate in swimming, athletics and cross country carnivals at school, regional, Diocesan and National levels. Gala Day opportunities were offered to Stage 2 and 3 children in Soccer, Netball & Basketball. The school also entered a Junior Boys team in the NSW Catholic Basketball Competition in Albury, finishing as Division 2 Champions.

Five Year 6 children participated in the Regional Science Fair with two of our children being awarded second place and one child also receiving the Best Primary Presented Project. All Year 6 children participated in the University of Wollongong’s Annual Science Fair.

Children participated in the Southern Illawarra Catholic Schools (SICS) planned enrichment days in the areas of Creative Arts and Mathematics. Children in Years 3-6 were also given the opportunity to participate in the University of New South Wales Mathematics and English competitions.

Shellharbour City Council Environmental Education Officers conducted workshops to celebrate Sea Week, develop an understanding of the importance of Water Conservation and an awareness of the environmental benefits of recycling.

Mr Matt Brown State MP for Kiama visited Year 5 to discuss the role of Government in NSW and Year 6 had the experience of a school camp at Berry Sport and Recreation Centre. Throughout the school a wide variety of excursions were planned and implemented to enrich and enhance student learning.

The Premiers Reading Challenge was again held in 2007 with children in Years 2-6 being encouraged to participate. One hundred and twenty two children took up the challenge and were rewarded with certificates in recognition of their achievements.

The School Ensemble and guitar groups grew in number this year, working with a music teacher towards performing at school celebrations throughout the year. Opportunities were also provided to interested children to lead singing and dancing as individuals, or in small groups, for special occasions.
**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 46 Year 3 and 45 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:**

9% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 20% of students in Band 5. The best performance was in Writing, followed by Reading and Language.

**Numeracy:**

34% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 11% of students in Band 5. The best performance was in Number, followed by Measurement and Space.

**Year 5**

**Literacy:**

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

**Numeracy:**

5% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 44% of students in Bands 5 and 6. The best performance was in Number, followed by Measurement and Space and Geometry.

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**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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>93</td>
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<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>93</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: National Benchmarks not included have not yet been published

**Parent, Student & Teacher Satisfaction**

All families in the school received a parent survey. A total of 224 were issued and 127 were returned completed. The majority of the survey responses fall within the Strongly Agree and Agree categories.

136 student surveys were returned from Years 4, 5 & 6 and again the majority of responses were in the Strongly Agree & Agree categories.

21 staff surveys were returned with the majority in the Strongly Agree and Agree categories.
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.

- Support the spiritual and faith formation of all staff
- Develop whole school practice to effectively improve student learning outcome in Numeracy
- Continue to develop a Catholic school culture that Reverences the Story of all People
- Continue to support, promote and affirm World Youth Day directives and activities
- To continue implementation of an Inquiry based framework for learning

Progress in 2007 Towards Achievements of School Renewal Plan

- Staff attendance at Religious Education Reflection Day
- Continue to implement and resource Kindergarten – Year 2 Religious Education Curriculum
- Celebrate annual Parish Feast Day with Nazareth and Corpus Christi.
- Development of the safe schools policy.
- Continue to support teaching and learning by updating and renewing resources.
- Complete construction of outdoor covered learning area.

Priorities for 2008

- To actively promote and market Stella Maris Catholic School to the wider community in view of increasing student enrolment.
- To introduce the School Review & Improvement process and induct staff in the implementation and on-going Professional Development.
- To resource the implementation of School Review & Improvement.
- Plan, organise and celebrate Stella Maris Catholic School Golden Jubilee
- Implement the Safe Schools Policy incorporating principles of Restorative Justice
- Review, evaluate and consolidate Key Learning Areas Scope and Sequence for learning.
- Continue to support the development of the SICS precinct.

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

Sr Colleen Mills
Principal