Annual School Report 2007

Vision Statement

St Michael’s is a caring Catholic school centred on Jesus Christ and is founded on Christian values. Together with the family and the Church, our school shares the responsibility of educating each child within a caring Christian community. Each child is seen as a unique being with special talents and needs. St Michael’s School prepares a curriculum that will effectively nurture and develop each child for personal growth.

Principal’s Message

St Michael’s Catholic School continues to exist as an integral part of the Thirroul parish providing quality learning and teaching and Catholic Faith development. Throughout 2007 the Parish community – Father McCarthy, the Principal, Catechists, staff and parents worked together to support and share the responsibility for student spiritual growth and development.

The staff of the school has appreciated the support of the Parents and Friends Association, Tuckshop Committee, parent helpers and the wider community of Thirroul. Without their generous support the school would not have resources such as the Information Communication Learning Technologies (ICLT) equipment, books and aids for our classrooms. Their assistance in classrooms, discos, fetes, fundraisers, cultural, sporting and academic endeavours is very much appreciated and illustrates how well our school community works together.

Thanks are extended to the School leadership team (SLT) for their efforts in supporting the effective operation of the school. The effectiveness of the school was evidenced by the comments and report from our School Review which was held in August, 2007. The school has a great team, with dedicated and talented staff, including the School Support Officers and office staff. The spiritual growth, welfare and education of the students are paramount to all members of the community.

Student Leadership

At St Michael’s the students and teachers elect a Captain and Vice Captain. We also have Colour House Captains, Peer Support Leaders and Student Representative Council. Year 6 are also buddies of the new Kindergarten and assist them in assimilating into their new school.

Parent Involvement

The Parent and Friends Association (P&F) meets on a monthly basis and work tirelessly to support the school in whatever way it can. The 2007 School Year began with a most successful welcome for parents new to the school. During Term 1 the school was given $4000 for Key Learning Areas. The main focus of this year has been raising money for new laptops to replace some of the ‘aged’ models. As in past years, despite the very heavy rain on the day, the school held a most successful fete. A total of around $15000 was raised. This result indicated the wonderful support the school receives from all the families at St Michael’s. A highlight of 2007 was the introduction of pottery days. A qualified art teacher came to guide the students in creating a creative piece of pottery to give to their parents for Christmas. The P&F Association purchased the clay, carried the cost of the teacher for the two days and were responsible for the firing and delivery of the pottery back to each classroom.

In 2007 the P&F Association donated $9,400 for the Key Learning Areas and $11,000 for
the purchase of laptops and an iTrolley. The Tuckshop Committee also donated $2,000 for sports equipment and artwork dryers.

School Profile

St Michaels Catholic School continues to acknowledge the importance of our history in being a school established by the Sisters of St Joseph in 1940.

St Michael’s is a systemic Catholic school within the Diocese of Wollongong. From its humble beginnings the school has developed into a one stream school, although at present the school has two streams in Year 5’s. In 2007 the school had 210 who come mainly from Thirroul and the Northern Suburbs of Wollongong, although there is an increasing number of children be drawn from the Southern Suburbs.

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

Student Enrolments

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>90</td>
<td>200</td>
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<td>2006</td>
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<td>98</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

to the link Policies.

Student Attendance for 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Staffing Profile

In 2007, St Michael’s Catholic School had a non-teaching Principal and 8 full-time teachers, while 4 teachers work at the school on a part-time basis. A teacher/librarian was employed to work in the library for three days a week. Three school support officers were employed to assist teachers in providing quality learning and teaching. A Senior School Support Officer (clerical) worked in administration assisted by a part-time Clerical Support Officer. A qualified counsellor, from Centacare, worked at the school one day a fortnight.

The school was administered by a School Leadership Team (SLT) which consisted of the Principal, Assistant Principal, Religious Education Co-ordinator and a Co-ordinator 2. The Parish Priest and a dedicated group of teachers and support staff supported the SLT. The school has a sound mix of age and experience on staff. All teachers employed at the school have university qualifications and 2 teachers have Master degrees. Staff retention is very high. One staff member is currently on maternity leave with another beginning maternity leave at the end of this year. The average daily staff attendance rate for 2007 was 97.68%.

Members of staff continue to improve their personal learning and growth. Teachers work collaboratively, meeting regularly to plan programs that enhance student learning. During 2007 teachers attended a variety of professional learning experiences which included Diversifying the Curriculum, Redefining the Safe Schools Environment, Teachology, Quality Numeracy and Literacy, Religious Education courses, Assessment, Teacher/Librarian and Information and Communication Network meetings. Teachers who had previously attended the “Animators” Course attended courses again this year and presented information to other staff members at staff meetings. The Reading Recovery teacher was in her second year of delivering the program.

Staff meetings became further opportunities for professional learning. Staff members as well as outside providers have led sessions in many areas of the curriculum and health and well being.

At the beginning of Term 3 the Principal was seconded to another school and the Leadership Team changed roles (Assistant Principal and Religious Education Co-ordinator). One younger teacher gained experience in the Religious Education Co-ordinator role. The school was involved in the School Review process and many hours were involved in preparing for the Review Panel’s visit. During the visit the school was commended for the school’s success complimented on the running of the school where the Panel believed members of the community were valued and students were involved in quality learning and teaching.
Teacher Standards

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>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>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

Upon visiting St Michael’s Catholic School it soon becomes apparent that it is very much a Parish school. This is evidenced by the close relationship between Father Lawrence McCarthy, school, community and parishioners and the involvement of people in supporting each other with Parish and school work.

Religious Education is the focus of the school, is taught on a daily basis and is integrated in all aspects of schooling and daily life. The Diocese of Wollongong Religious Education Curriculum is the endorsed curriculum for all grades from Kindergarten to Year 6, in conjunction with St Michael’s Religious Education Policy.

Thirty Year 4 students undertook the Diocesan Religious Education Literacy Assessment. Students completed a written examination and also submitted a long term project. The long term project was based on the theme “One with God’s Creation”. The results of the written examination were collated by the Australian Catholic University and sent to parents.

The staff members are dedicated to providing a quality Catholic education whilst acknowledging the need to work closely with the families and Church. The collaborative, collegial approach to all aspects of school life ensures all members of the school community have the opportunity to contribute to direction and decision making. The whole school community modelled Catholic values by their support and involvement in special fundraising activities including Mission Week, Project Compassion, Daffodil Day, MS Readathon, St Vincent de Paul, CanTeen and Pink Ribbon Day.

The school endeavours to build and nurture quality relationships between all members of the Parish school community. The school provides effective means of communication with information being shared amongst all stakeholders through regular communication meetings with staff, distribution of a weekly Newsletter and when necessary the use of other materials or meetings. The school website is constantly updated allowing parents to access a variety of information about the school.

St Michael’s is part of a precinct group which includes St Joseph’s Bulli and Holy Cross Helensburgh. It is our intention to work more closely with these communities through communication and sharing of resources.

The Year 2007 began with a Welcoming Mass for the staff and a Commissioning Mass for teachers and catechists. This ceremony acknowledged the valuable work done by the St Michael’s staff and catechists in the Thirroul Parish. The students began the new school year with a Welcoming Mass and Presentation of Badges to the 2007 school leaders.

Each term, two Sunday Parish Masses were earmarked as special celebrations for children and their families. The children participated by reading, singing, percussion, liturgical movements and other special liturgical features relevant to Sundays of the year. Throughout the year, students also have the opportunity to plan and attend mass with their class group and with the whole school. Special Feast Days and celebrations held this year included: Ash Wednesday, Feast of Mary MacKillop, Feast of the Sacred Heart, The Assumption, All Saints Day and the Immaculate Conception of Mary. A Liturgy of the Word was held for each day of Holy Week and Easter.
Father McCarthy visits on a weekly basis. This reflects his involvement in the school. During his time in the school, he visits classrooms, has input in class programs and shares morning tea with staff.

Sacramental Programs are family based and parish, school and parents work together to prepare children for the Sacraments of Penance, First Eucharist and Confirmation. Father McCarthy and class teachers present an innovative program for each Sacrament. This year a member of staff has also been invited to be a member of the World Youth Day 08 Committee.

**Student Welfare**

St Michael’s Catholic School is committed to creating a safe and supportive environment where all are treated respectfully and justly. In compliance with the NSW Reform Act 1990, Corporal Punishment is banned in all schools within the Diocese of Wollongong.

This year a range of programs have been implemented to support the welfare of students including, Child Protection, Behaviour Management, Bike Education and Safety, Walk Safely to School Program and Anti-Bullying initiatives. The staff are working on and continuing to implement the new Pastoral Care and Behaviour Policy, which is characterised by the need to recognise student achievement and reward positive behaviour, whilst also providing guidelines for the management of students who behave inappropriately.

A Centacare Counsellor works at St Michael’s for one day a fortnight. The Counsellor works with individual students, parents and class groups. She also supports staff in addressing welfare issues. The Counsellor co-ordinates class programs on friendship, relationships and conflict resolution. The staff work with the Counsellor to assist in addressing students social and emotional development.

Every Friday St Michael’s Catholic School celebrates students’ achievements at an Awards Assembly. Parents are invited to attend and share in the school and students’ successes. The students have the opportunity to earn Superstar Awards, Principal’s Awards and a St Michael’s Blue Award. Student work samples and creative projects are also displayed in the entrance foyer of the school and the students receive a Strive for Excellence Award.

St Michael’s continued the Transition to School Program for the 2008 Kindergarten class. After an initial parent session the children came to school for four consecutive Mondays. The purpose of the program is to make starting school easier for Kindergarten students.

In Term 1, Year 6 students attended the National Young Leaders Day. This day was organised for students so they could be given the opportunity to hear high profile members of the community speak about leadership.

In Term 2, the senior students undertook an intensive Peer Support training course (Taking Opportunities) to assist them in their role as Peer Support Leaders. In Term 4, Year 6 students were also involved in the Transition to High School Program, ‘Hit the Ground Running’. The day was led by the School Counsellor and assisted by the Year 6 teacher. Two ex students from Holy Spirit College, Bellambi were invited to address any questions and get involved with the Year 6 students.

This year a further two staff members attended an intensive professional development course called “Rethinking Safe School Environments”. This course highlighted the importance of providing a safe environment for all students. As part of this initiative a Staff Development Day was held for all staff with a focus on Behaviour Management and Anti-Bullying practices. As a result, the school’s Pastoral Care and Discipline Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy were updated. Access to all policies and guidelines can be obtained by contacting the school office.

In 2007 two staff members attended an intensive Occupational Health and Safety Consultation Course. This course involved effective decision making and how to establish a safe environment for staff, students and visitors.

The Complaints & Grievances Procedures can be found on the Catholic Education Office website: [www.ceowoll.catholic.edu.au](http://www.ceowoll.catholic.edu.au) then go to the link Policies.
**Financial Summary**

In 2007 the Parents & Friends Association donated $9,400 for the Key Learning Areas and $11,000 for the purchase of laptops and an iTrolley. The Tuckshop Committee also donated $2,000 for sports equipment and artwork dryers.

The following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for St Michael’s Catholic Primary School, for the year ended 31 December 2007. This data is taken from the 2007 financial return to the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

**Learning & Teaching**

Learning and Teaching at St Michael’s is delivered in an environment which is characterised by a strong sense of pastoral care at all levels. Positive steps have been taken to develop true and effective partnerships with parents within the school. There is a high level of support from parents as classroom volunteers and community events are well attended. A diverse range of co-curricula programs and activities are offered to meet the special interests of students.

Most NSW Board of Studies and Diocesan requirements are being met and there is an emphasis on Religious Education, Literacy, Numeracy and ICLT.

Elements of collaborative planning and team teaching exist and there is distributed responsibility to support curriculum development. Staff members are committed to professional development offered at school and diocesan level.

**Literacy**

Literacy is given a high priority within the school. This is evidenced by:

- a commitment to a literacy block containing most elements as outlined in the Diocesan Literacy Policy
- whole school focus on talking and listening
- ongoing commitment to the Reading Recovery Program
- involvement of the Principal in the Guided Reading Program
- significantly high level of results in Basic Skills Test (BST)
- integration of Literacy through other Key Learning Areas (KLA’s) and the school research program
- strong commitment to the employment of School Support Officers to support Literacy
- purchase and management of Literacy resources

**Numeracy**

Numeracy continues to be a priority within the school and there is commitment to enhancing the professional development of the staff. Classroom programs reflect outcomes from the NSW Board of Studies Mathematics Syllabus.
This is evidenced by:
• commitment to maths groups across most of the school  
• significantly high level of results in BST  
• participation of staff in Count Me In Too and other professional development in Mathematics  
• the use of SENA tracking folders to track student progress  
• involvement of parents in maths groups  
• purchase and management of maths resources

**Indigenous Education**

There is commitment to including Indigenous Perspectives across the curriculum. This is evidenced by:
• the development of a school scope and sequence to map experiences in Indigenous Education and a timeline for future development.

**Co-curricula**

There is significant commitment to providing opportunities to develop the skills and talents of individual students and to promote the school within the wider community. This is evidenced by:
• involvement in civics and environmental education projects within the wider community  
• opportunities for students to participate in a wide variety of co-curricula activities including: Wakakirri, band, orchestra and school concert  
• participation in school and Diocesan sporting carnivals and gala days  
• systematic selection of students for pathways to Diocesan and PSSA trials  
• student participation in academic competitions  
• the high level of parental support and expertise  
• further contact with students from Sule College on Harmony Day  
• visiting authors for Book Week – Cynthia Hartman and Caren Trafford.

**Expanded Learning Opportunities**

• A four week skills development from the Illawarra Netball Association was held for all students from Kindergarten to Year 6  
• Representative squads have participated in Diocesan events such as Swimming, Athletics and Cross Country. Students from Year 3 to Year 6 are involved in Community Sport on a rotation basis and attend dance, lawn bowls and tennis programs.  
• Regular visits to McCauley Lodge (Retirement Home), to entertain the residents. This includes band, orchestra and choir.  
• Performance by the band at regular assemblies, Wollongong Mall, Catholic Women’s League and other school functions.  
• Gardening projects such as vegetable, herb and flower garden. Bird bath installed to attract wild birds to feed at our school.  
• Collection of food scraps to start a compost heap and feed worms. Gardening group continued to attend to garden around the school and generally tidy up.  
• Two students attended the Public Speaking Competition at Nowra.  
• Students once again achieved good results in the University of NSW competitions and Year 6 were involved in the Maths Challenge and all students scored high distinctions.

**Analysis of Student Data**

The students at St Michael’s achieve a significantly high level of results in yearly Basic Skills Tests. Strong emphasis is placed on exposing students to teaching and learning that supports testing and assessment. This is evidenced by:
• sharing of BST data results with whole staff  
• tracking of SENA and ELA data  
• ongoing monitoring of Reading Recovery

**Learning Technology**

Learning Technology is a clear priority within the school. There is an emphasis on building the expertise of staff and providing access to technology and communication resources. This is evidenced by:
• opportunities for teachers to participate in Diocesan and school based professional development such as: TEACHnology and Learning Communities Project  
• the priority given to supporting the development of teachers’ skills in ICLT through the use of an ICLT Co-ordinator to mentor, collaborate and team teach within classrooms
• availability of computer hardware to support learning and teaching
• opportunities for all students to incorporate ICLT skills in their learning
• plans to further enhance learning through future hardware purchases

**Special Education**

Students with educational disabilities are integrated into the mainstream. All staff are aware of students with educational, medical and behavioural needs and there is commitment to developing a whole school management plan for the inclusion of these students. This is evidenced by:
• the use of school support officers to support classroom learning
• implementation and use of GoalView for tracking students individual needs
• commitment of staff to meet with parents of students with additional needs
• commitment of staff to attend professional development to support students with medical and additional needs
• existence of a Review Committee to support staff in identifying students with learning difficulties and procedures for extending students.

**Programming and Assessment**

Most elements of the Diocesan Programming Policy are being addressed in teaching programs. All Key Learning Areas are taught with a degree of flexibility and integration, with opportunities for students to group across the stage. Processes exist for opportunities for collegial sharing and supervision. A range of assessment instruments are being used to gather information on student performance, including ELA, BST, SENA and Religious Literacy. This is evidenced by:
• an emergence of scope and sequence attempting to address Board of Studies requirements
• outcome based programming in most KLA’s
• development of integrated units of work across KLA’s
• strong assessment of student learning
• collection of student work samples to support teacher judgement
• the use of the mandatory A-E reporting system

**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 29 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: 0% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 38% of students in Band 5. The best performance was in Reading and Writing followed by Language.
- Numeracy: 7% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 41% of students in Band 5. The best performance was in Number, Patterns and Algebra, followed by Measurement and Data, Space and Geometry.

**Year 5**

- Literacy: 0% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 84% of students in Bands 5 and 6. The best performance was in Writing, followed by Language and Reading.
- Numeracy: 0% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 82% of students in Bands 5 and 6. The best performance was in Number, Patterns and Algebra, followed by Measurement and Data and Space and Geometry.

The following graphs give an indication of the learning gains made by students in their journey from Year 3 to Year 5.
Learning Gain — Literacy

[Graph showing percentage for bands 1 to 6 for Year 3 and Year 5 of 2005 and 2007.]

Learning Gain — Numeracy

[Graph showing percentage for bands 1 to 6 for Year 3 and Year 5 of 2005 and 2007.]

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></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>
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<td>Reading</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: National Benchmarks not included have not yet been published.
School Renewal Priorities

The School Renewal Plan is designed to focus our actions to bring about positive change and growth. The following have been identified as key focus areas for the school during the current cycle of this plan. The School Renewal Plan generally sets directions for a period of 3 – 5 years. It is subject to regular evaluations.

- Completion of the School Renewal Plan and presentation of the plan to the school community
- Focus on Behavioural Management
- Focus on the basics of Literacy and Numeracy

Progress in 2007 Towards Achievements of School Renewal Plan

- Continuation of promoting the school band
- Continuation of promoting the school orchestra
- Continuation of whole school focus on public speaking
- School website updated
- Successful School Review
- Successful Science day
- Successful whole school involvement in pottery classes with outside facilitator
- Purchase of various religious icons to be placed around the school
- Introduction of a mini art show
- Continuation of the Student Representative Council
- Maintenance around school – new driveway for truck access and reseeding of playground areas

Priorities for 2008

- Introduction of the Learning Communities Project 2008 – ‘Back to Basics’
- Professional development on Restorative Justice – working with other school groups
- Professional development on Habits of Mind – teachers from St Paul’s Camden
- Commencement of the implementation of the new School Review and Development strategies
- Restructure of staff to allow for stage planning and the use of a teacher in addressing some of the students in need of literacy and numeracy assistance
- Construction of a volley ball court
- Behaviour Management Policy to be updated
- World Youth Day 08

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

Anne Duggan
Acting Principal