Vision Statement

St Francis of Assisi’s School is a Catholic School where Gospel Values, traditions and a true Franciscan Spirit continues to challenge staff, students and parents. We will strive to build a community of Faith where the education of the whole child is the primary concern.

Principal’s Message

Father Joseph Nguyen, as Parish Priest, continues to lead the Parish with a great sense of community. He is supported by the commitment and support of Fr David, Fr Leonard and Brother Louis in their combined dedication to the key ministry of the school within the Parish. Our community of Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus also continues to sustain our tradition and identity.

The year has been highlighted by our successful submissions for two government grants. The Federal ‘Investing in our Schools Project’ (IOSP) grant afforded purchases of $20,000 for learning resources, including computers, interactive whiteboard and literacy resources. The other, is a Federal Government building project grant which is currently seeing the entire internal school undergoing renovation. The result will be new, modern learning environments and administration areas.

These are exciting times for our school as we upgrade facilities and resources that will see us as modern and well-equipped as any school in the region.

We have welcomed many new families this year, some from local schools, others new to the area and several from overseas. As school enrolments continue to rise, and given the unique nature of our school, we have been supported by the Director of Schools with increased staffing for the new year.

Parent Involvement

Although the Food Fiesta was cancelled due to the building project, we are proud of much, including the exciting prospect of having better facilities and learning environments; record breaking Mothers’/Fathers’ Day stalls; expenditure for class furniture; pledged funds for 2008; securing required staffing allocation

Thanks for all who supported the meetings. Special acknowledgement to our Diocesan P&F delegates and to the P & F Executive.

We again truly valued Fr Joe, Sister Grace and communities for their spiritual support, maintaining the intrinsic School/Parish link. We acknowledge the Principal and staff, for being outstanding in their making of a caring, vibrant learning facility.  

Student Leadership

The school has done so much for us through quality learning and sincere care. We have excellent ICLT resources and now, exciting new renovations. It is changing, improving and developing to become a school to envy.

Leadership opportunities expanded to include a Stage 3 Student Representative Council, which enabled closer partnerships with students and staff. We have felt involved and appreciated. We were tutored in public speaking by a drama teacher, and attended the Young Leaders’ Day, both greatly benefiting us.

Captains
School Profile

The school opened in 1960. The foundation Franciscan Orders of Sisters and Friars continue to serve a largely multicultural community, this year comprising 29 nationalities and 70% of students with a non-English speaking background.

There is a large diversity of needs within the school, all of which require careful consideration and planning. The School attracts special funding to support our diverse community and our dedicated staff work hard to achieve optimum outcomes for each child on behalf of their parents.

Enrolments have grown over the last several years due to the school’s fine reputation and prominent local profile, plus changing demographics.

This year class teachers further developed Stage-based approaches to enhance learning. Support staff was allocated to Stages and were directly involved in students’ learning with an emphasis on K-2 as an early intervention strategy. This collaboration and team approach were an integral part of daily classroom activity.

Student Enrolments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Attendance for 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Staffing Profile

There were fifteen teachers in total.

The Leadership Team was five in number with nine full time classroom teachers, full time Reading Recovery teacher, and part time teachers for Library, P.E., Music, Executive Relief and Literacy Support.

There were five part time School Support Officers, and one full time and two part time office personnel.

Post graduate qualifications are: Master of Education; Graduate Diploma in Adult Education; Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies; Bachelor of Teaching; Bachelor of Education; Graduate Diploma in Educational Studies; Graduate Diploma in Religious Education; Masters of Arts in Theology; Masters in Education.

We will gain 1 class teacher for 2008, having been granted an increased staffing allocation. The average daily staff attendance rate for 2007 was 96.73%

Teacher Standards

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
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</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>%</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Australian Education Institution – National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition

Internal (or school based) professional learning mainly centred around staff feedback and training as a follow-up to courses attended.

In addition, several school-organised staff meetings provided opportunities for professional dialogue, especially in the areas of differentiating the curriculum, learning styles, Stage-based learning and pedagogy, ecological conversion, and staff and student welfare procedures.

In Term 2, the staff joined two other schools in a Diocesan initiative to focus on Values Education, in response to the Federal Government schools’ program.

It provided an opportunity to reflect on Catholic perspectives and assess the work we do (within the curriculum and Pastoral Care procedures). In addition, the school integrated Drug Education program into our Values Education program, complying with a Government statute to conduct Values and Drug Education forums, inclusive of parents.

First Aid training was updated by staff and most participated in Anaphylaxis training.

School based expenditure on professional learning in 2007 was $1 573. This is in addition to expenditure on professional learning opportunities provided by the Catholic Education Office.
**Culture of the Catholic School**

St Francis of Assisi school owes its existence, spirit and traditions to the Franciscan Friars and the Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus. We are grateful for the inspiration of Fr Joseph Nguyen in his role as Parish Priest and the Friars who ably assist Fr Joe - Fr David Huebner and Br Louis.

We are also fortunate to have the Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus minister in the School and Parish.

As a Catholic School, prayer plays a very important role in the daily life of the school. Each day we began with prayer at assembly, lead by the Principal, Assistant Principal or the Religious Education Coordinator and one day a week by Year 6. Liturgy was an integral part of our school with Stage based Masses celebrated each term and a class joining with the Parish each week to celebrate Mass. There was also an opportunity for Reconciliation in Terms 1 and 3. In addition, the Friars shared their time and talents with class visits in Terms 2 and 4.

As a school community we displayed our Catholic identity in several ceremonies: Commissioning of Staff and Induction of Captains, Anzac Day, Remembrance Day, Easter and Christmas Liturgies, Year 6 Conversation with the Bishop, St Francis’ Feast Day, Christmas Carols at the nursing homes and assemblies and liturgies throughout the year.

This year the school participated in Parish-based Sacramental Programs which have brought students and their parents together for a series of lessons to prepare for the reception of Sacraments Confirmation, Eucharist and Penance. These programs were initiated by the Parish Priest and led by teachers and catechists.

Teachers continued to implement quality Religious Education Programs using the Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum. Year 4 once again participated in the Diocesan RE Literacy Assessment.

Social Justice issues retained great importance in our school. This year the school supported several projects- Caritas, World Youth Day, Catholic Mission, Vietnamese Franciscan Relief Effort and Christmas Boxes for countries such as Peru, Phillipines, Zambia and Vietnam.

Approximately $1300 was raised by the children to support these projects.

**Student Welfare**

Access to all policies and guidelines can be obtained by contacting the School Office.

**Pastoral Care Initiatives** included the work of our new school Centacare Counsellor and in liaising with class teachers to further complement individual welfare programs. Social skills and transition to High School programs ran. In addition, Behaviour Management procedures were consolidated and Pastoral Care plans updated for students and staff requiring consideration related to medical conditions and disability. A very successful Seasons for Growth program was facilitated in three groups from K-6.

**‘Safe Schools’ Framework’ Initiatives** A welcoming and supportive induction to school for our new students and their families remained an important function of the school with many new Kindergarten children, new families and those new students from other local schools. Communication and procedures were revised to ensure consistent care and expectations. Complaints and Grievances Procedures can be found on the CEO website.

**Behaviour Management** procedures were further refined, especially in dealing with the management of playground issues. The approach supported consistency in dealing with behaviours and promoted child-centred responsibility for behaviour choices. Positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviours continued to be a focus. A popular reward for those who display consistency in the classroom and playground, was the invitation to a Reward Morning Tea hosted by the Principal. The ‘Peace and Justice’ program again proved a success, as each grade focussed on elements of peer relations. Children are trusted, rewarded and held accountable to contribute in a consistent and positive manner to our school as a safe and happy place for all. In compliance with the NSW Reform Act 1990, corporal punishment is banned in all Diocesan schools.

**Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility** centred around the establishment of a Stage 3 Student Representative Council. Captains and senior students furthered peer and staff relations across the school. Their role included the coordination and hosting of school assemblies, distributing and allocating rewards, organising activities for younger students, visiting classes and arranging fundraising events. Integrated into their work was the promotion of our Values Education.
**Financial Summary**

The following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for St Francis of Assisi 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**

**Introduction**

The staff of St. Francis of Assisi School prides itself on the provision of quality Catholic Learning and Teaching. Our School Renewal Plan and Curriculum Plans (Literacy, Numeracy and ICLT) reflected a desire for sound practice, innovation and professional learning. Our strategic intent was to determine priorities that enhance learning and improve teacher effectiveness that better the learning outcomes for the students.

**Curriculum and Pedagogy**

St Francis of Assisi School uses the Board of Studies Curricula to plan, teach and assess in the Key Learning Areas (KLAs) of English, Mathematics, Human Society and its Environment, Science and Technology, Personal Development, Health and Physical Education, and Creative and Practical Arts from Early Stage 1 to Stage 3. Additionally, we use the Diocese of Wollongong Religious Education Curriculum to plan, teach and assess Religious Education. The teachers use the Board of Studies and Diocesan Guidelines to allocate appropriate time to the teaching of the KLAs each week.

Assessment and Reporting was an integral part of the teaching/learning process. The new A-E Reports, introduced last year, were sent home at the end of Term 2 and 4, followed by the opportunity for the parents to meet with class teachers to discuss matters pertaining specifically to their child.

Information and Communication Learning Technologies (ICLT) were used to enhance daily learning by being integrated across all KLAs and in all Stages. Classrooms have multiple desktop computers and our ICLT lab consists of 14 desktops. Additionally, we have thirty one laptops organised in pods of ten and housed in portable itrolleys per Stage. As such they are easily transported between the classrooms within a particular Stage.

The students used their own internet desktop space known as myinternet, which provided opportunities for students to communicate via email and to be engaged in online learning activities using myclasses. Class web pages were updated once a term and used to provide online learning experiences to consolidate and enrich learning and teaching programs taught within classes.
The school achieved fourth place in this year’s Westfield ‘Shop for Your School’ competition. The prize pool consisted of an Apple Macbook, Apple ipod, hi fi, Apple 30GB Video iPod, Lexmark Colour Laser Duplex Printer and Stabilo Stationary Pack. The total value of this prize pool was in excess of $4,600. Students regularly used the digital equipment to assist their learning and multimedia presentations were commonly used by students to share their learning.

The school purchased a third Interactive Whiteboard (SMARTboard) to further expand the ICLT opportunities offered to the students. Following professional reading and expert demonstration the SMARTboards have been incorporated into the teaching and learning experiences programmed per class. Interactive Whiteboards are touch screens that enable individuals to manipulate information displayed on them via a laptop computer and data projector. They are portable to enable easy access by all staff and students.

The new Interactive Whiteboard was purchased through the Federal IOSP grant, along with five new ibooks, Reading Boxes (levelled reading comprehension activities), thesauruses, dictionaries and atlases. These newly acquired resources will further enhance the teaching and learning experiences accessible by the students.

Meeting the Needs of all Students

All staff members remained acutely aware of the need to diversify the curriculum to better meet the needs of the students. Stage-based groupings in English and/or Mathematics were successfully used as a means of addressing the range of abilities within cohorts of students.

Providing more directed learning in some instances and more open-ended learning in others helped cater for the educational needs of all students. Improved teacher pedagogy and planning to differentiate learning remained a focus. More effective organisation of support staff created a better sense of staff learning teams as they, along with class teachers, collaborated. The smaller groups this enabled resulted in more effective remediation or enrichment.

A Review Committee monitored students experiencing difficulty. Records of recommendations and strategies implemented are kept in Transition Profile folders and reviewed and evaluated regularly. Transition meetings with class teachers, support staff and parents were held every term for the children who attract Commonwealth Government Funding. GoalView was used to track these students and Individual Education Programs (IEPs) were developed for them for implementation in the classroom.

Reading Recovery continued to provide support for Year 1 students deemed in need of intervention to accelerate their reading and writing skills. This year eleven children were successfully discontinued from the Reading Recovery Program. Long-term monitoring again supported ex-Reading Recovery students up to Year 4.

Expanded Learning Opportunities

Students had the chance to participate in a variety of expanded learning opportunities. These included the Australasian School Competitions in English, Mathematics, Spelling, Computer and Science. The school also offered Public Speaking at a local and Regional level, the St. Francis of Assisi Feast Day Talent Quest, the Nestle Writing Competition and the Premier’s Reading Challenge. There were various competitions for Book Week and community-based art competitions.

Our school once again hosted the Life Education Van. The visit of the van enabled all children in class groups to attend lessons designed to provide knowledge and understanding through a variety of media that promotes a healthy lifestyle. The programs directly linked to the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education Curriculum and catered for all children from K-6. The Life Education program included topics on healthy food choices, the importance of physical activity, emergency procedures, resilience, managing peer pressure designed to inform children of the harmful effects of legal and illegal drugs. Lessons ran for between sixty and ninety minutes depending on the age of the children. Student workbooks were used to consolidate the learning in the classrooms following the visit of the van.

Sport and PE were a key part of school life. The school’s qualified PE teacher conducted a weekly lesson for each class and coordinated a twice-weekly Fitness Program comprising cardio activities. A positive attitude towards fitness was the focus.
The school held three sport carnivals: Swimming, Cross Country and Athletics. Students, staff and parents are actively involved. The students are grouped into Houses: Margherita (Blue), Francis (Green), Clare (Red) and Kolbe (Yellow), so named because of their association to our Patron Saint and the Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus.

An increased number of children competed at a Regional level in Swimming and Athletics, and a Diocesan level for Cross Country. In addition, two children made it to the Diocesan Trials in Swimming and Athletics and one progressed to the MacKillop Athletics Time Trials. One child was selected in the MacKillop team for Cross Country.

**Professional Learning**

The school was successful in obtaining a Learning Community Project as applied for through the Wollongong Diocese Catholic Education Office. The aim of the project was to modify teachers’ pedagogy through the identification and understanding of students at risk and the establishment of a whole school approach to provide effective remediation for these students. During the project staff were released to analyse Basic Skills Test results in Literacy over recent years to identify areas of need. The result of this was the creation of a list of recommendations and implications for learning and teaching that since became adopted by the staff and incorporated into the daily English block.

In Stage-based teams staff began the development of scope and sequence matrixes and the development of assessment plans. This was considered necessary across all KLAs in order to effect more consistent teacher judgement when assessing and equitable apportioning of teaching and learning experiences Science and Technology, and Human Society and Its Environment.

A member of the staff was the winner of The Excellence in Schooling Awards – Early Career category as presented by the Diocese of Wollongong Catholic Education Office in September. She was recognised for her contribution to the school community as an innovative, caring and dedicated professional.

**Student Achievement**

The school used a variety of assessment strategies at key points in the learning framework. These included teacher observation, assignments, presentations and school based assessments.

A selection of formal standardised assessments were conducted from K-6, addressing aspects of Literacy and Numeracy. Several assessments are repeated per year or per Stage so over a period of years, learning gains can be measured.

Assessments combined to identify each child’s current status in terms of their learning. Assessment consolidated or informed teachers’ understandings of their students’ learning and therefore, informed class programs and planning to best meet learners’ needs. Assessment data (including Basic Skills Test results) was again recorded on individual student Tracking Sheets that remain with each student’s file as they progress through the grades.

The school also participated 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 was communicated and discussed on a regular basis involving staff teams and parents.

**Basic Skills Test**

There were thirty three Year 3 and twenty six 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, with 42% of students in Bands 4 and 5. There was little or no difference in Reading, Writing and Language.

- **Numeracy:**
  21% of students were in Bands 1 with 27% of students in Bands 4 and 5. There was little or no difference in Number, Space and Measurement and Data and Patterns and Algebra.
Year 5

Literacy:
4% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 46% of students in Bands 5 and 6. There was little or no difference in Reading, Writing and Language.

Numeracy:
8% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 58% of students in Bands 5 and 6. There was little or no difference in Number, Space and Measurement and Data and Patterns and Algebra.

National Benchmarks

The table below indicates as a percentage the Year 3 and Year 5 of students achieving the national benchmarks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></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>96</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learning Gain - Literacy

[Graph showing learning gains for Year 3 and Year 5 for literacy]

Learning Gain - Numeracy

[Graph showing learning gains for Year 3 and Year 5 for numeracy]
**Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction**

**Areas of Strength**

In the survey conducted, responses from students, parents and staff indicated a strong sense of pride in the school. It was acknowledged that the school assists the students, in a significant way, in their understanding of the Catholic faith.

Student awareness of rights and responsibilities was high and seen as closely related to the way they and others conducted themselves in making for a safe school environment. As a result, there was a distinct impression that there are clear support structures, rules and procedures in place, and they can rely on peers and staff for help and support. Again, they viewed support for their learning as high and were encouraged to know and strive for their potential.

An important aspect of school life, in the students’ general view, was the availability of sport activities especially gala days and the opportunity to represent in athletics, swimming and cross country. Other activities, as clearly valued, were optional school, community, university and corporate competitions - art, creative arts, environmental projects, writing and formal academic competitions in English, Maths, Science and Computers.

Parents agreed that their child was helped in developing their view of Catholic tradition. Similarly, all agreed that there were opportunities to be involved and that communication was effective. Most strongly agreed that their children were suitably challenged according to their learning needs and potential, and that reporting processes were very good.

Again, most strongly agreed that the school provided a safe environment, showed care for each child’s welfare and encouraged extra curricular learning opportunities.

Staff members, in general, strongly believed that the school adopted effective measures to maximise learning outcomes and to meet individual learning needs. This was seen to be enhanced by the provision of a safe and supportive environment as well as the children’s understanding of their rights and responsibilities as learners and peers.

Reporting to parents was seen as comprehensive, taking the form of formal School Reports twice a year, parent/teacher meetings to correspond with Reports and meetings each Term with parents who have children with special needs. Other informal reporting of progress was seen as effective. Common methods were communication via diaries, interviews at the request of parents or school, availability of teachers outside school hours and phone calls.

**Areas of Future Development**

Several aspects were identified from a very small, yet equally important view that we need to prioritise.

The school needs to continue to focus on addressing individual learning needs. There is a uniquely large diversity of learners within each grade. This is achieved through effective pedagogy, the way we structure learning groups, collaborative work with support staff and the way we differentiate the curriculum to suit the variety of learners. Students need to be constantly challenged to know and reach potentials, and in so doing, share the responsibility for their learning. In addition, the integration of meaningful and diverse Information and Communication Technologies is an ongoing feature in planning and staff professional development.

Also as a result of surveys, it was noted that the school should continue to review how the students understand their rights and responsibilities. This relates to the way they deal with each other in social and play settings, and remains a focus of staff.

We continually review behaviour management procedures in creating a consistent and fair approach, in which children take responsibility for their choices and actions, and staff adopt a known approach when helping them.

The above will be identified within the priorities of our School Improvement Plan for 2008.
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.

- To build upon strategies that will sustain the Franciscan tradition;
- To demonstrate clear action when considering and addressing Pastoral Care matters;
- To further develop innovation in delivering quality learning experiences and programs;
- To identify spending priorities funded through school funds, SEDSO and government grants.

Progress in 2007 Towards Achievements of School Renewal Plan

- Each staff member set personal and professional goals related to their respective roles as well as their role as a member of the school community.
- Review of the School Renewal Plan’s priorities and time-frames, organised within the four Key Reference Committees (Catholic Identity, Pastoral Care, Learning and Teaching, Administration).
- School Plans in Literacy, Numeracy and Information, Communication and Learning Technologies were evaluated and revised, with budgetary and professional learning aspects considered.
- Professional Dialogue Staff Meetings allowed for reflection in pedagogical approaches.
- Assessment and reporting procedures were consolidated. This process involved professional learning, staff collaboration, and parent information and consultation. Parent/teacher meetings were encouraged for all, and mandatory for some students, as learning goals were set.
- Grants through ‘Investing in Our Schools’ Program and the School Building Project required careful management of funds, personnel, resources and the school plant. Liaising with, and accountability to stakeholders created ongoing collaboration and the realisation of a shared vision.

Priorities for 2008

- The ‘Investing in our Schools’ ICLT purchases require a commitment to pedagogy that embraces and integrates ICLT in enhancing student learning outcomes.
- The Federal Government grant to upgrade school buildings and facilities will initially create ongoing logistic challenges. Completion of Stage 1 has the potential for these class teachers and learning teams to demonstrate potentials of the new physical environment.
- To consolidate early intervention programs and structures (K-2) plus further develop Stage groups and Modules across the school.
- To work towards the achievement of measurable learning outcomes, identified in Term 4, 2007.
- To build upon the effective, active and visible relations forged within the Parish.

The information in this report has been verified and the priorities endorsed by the Acting Director of Schools and the Head of School Services.

Peter Turner
Director of Schools

Paul Longobardi
Principal