Annual School Report 2007

Vision Statement

To provide knowledge and experience in religious education that will allow students to form beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviour based on sound religious faith and a commitment to our Church.

To provide quality education in an encouraging environment that allows students to achieve sound understandings on all key areas.

Principal’s Message

2007 has again been a year where much has been achieved. What has been particularly pleasing is the strong and continuing relationships between home, School and Parish. This has resulted in the maintenance of a positive environment for our children.

A message from the P&F President:

Parents are involved in many and varied ways at St Therese West Wollongong. We have an active Parents and Friends Association that meets twice a term and coordinates the raising of funds to provide material assistance in equipping, maintaining and developing the school. In 2007, the P&F ran school discos, Mother and Fathers’ Day stalls, a muffin drive and a Parish Social night. Other ways that parents are also involved via volunteering include running the school canteen, reading in classrooms, assisting in supervision on school excursions, and assisting at sports carnivals. A particular focus this year has been on ways to improve the playground which will we are working to implement.

A message from a Year 6 Student Leader:

St Therese - what a wonderful school! Over the past seven years I have made great bonds with my friends and teachers and these will never be forgotten. Year 6 and I have formed many great relationships with our Kindergarten buddies. I hope they have an enjoyable adventure, as much as my friends and I have. St Therese has allowed us to become successful and talented in education and sport. Year 6 has many important roles and responsibilities, all of which we have enjoyed, and which have made the school a better place. Because we are a Catholic school, our role in the Catholic community has been very important. I will always cherish and respect the time that I experienced at St Therese and have memories that will last forever. Thank you so much to the teachers, staff and the St Therese community.

Our Learning Community Project, centred upon enhancing the learning environment through an emphasis on Restorative Justice and Practices, has assisted all members of the school community to become more aware of each other’s needs and feelings.

School Profile

As early as 1939 St Therese Primary School had its beginnings when the Good Samaritan Sisters travelled out each day to conduct school in the ‘Little Flower’ Church.

Cardinal Gilroy laid the foundation stone for the school in 1949 and the first part of the school was opened in 1950.

The school is very well established in the Wollongong area with a fine record of academic excellence and wonderful...
achievements in cultural and sporting endeavours. The staff of St Therese are dedicated and hardworking and strive to discern and fully develop the potential of each of their students.

The school motto ‘Love Can Do All Things’, provides our school with the vision and direction to communicate and to live out the teachings of our Church in an environment that fosters the growth and nurturing of a deep and meaningful faith life.

We have a strong commitment to Literacy and Numeracy learning. We are well equipped in the area of Information Technology, with a school network in place and Internet access available in each of the classrooms. The children also have regular opportunities to celebrate their faith, with school liturgical celebrations being a very important part of life at St Therese.

**Student Enrolments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>192</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>385</td>
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</table>

The Enrolment Policy and 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.

**Student Attendance for 2007**

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>94.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td></td>
<td>94.6</td>
</tr>
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**Staffing Profile**

St Therese Primary School has a staff of 32 consisting of full and part-time personnel. There are 25 teachers who fulfil the following roles within the school: classroom, Teacher – Librarian, PE, Literacy Support, Reading Recovery, Religious Education Coordinator release and Leadership Team release. The Leadership Team comprises the Principal, Assistant Principal, Religious Education Coordinator and 3 x Coordinator 2.

There are 16 classroom teachers (including 1 Flexible Work arrangement), two part-time Resource teachers, two part-time Teacher / Librarians, one part-time PE teacher, two part-time Reading Recovery teachers and three School Support Officers (SSO) who assist in the classroom. Administrative support includes: One Senior SSO, one SSO who works in the school office, one SSO who works in the Library.

There is one teacher in the 3rd to 5th year of teaching, two teachers in the 6th to 10th year, one teacher in the 11th to 15th year, five teachers in the 16th to 20th year and sixteen teachers with over 20 years’ teaching experience. A number of teachers have also completed post graduate courses. These include: Master of Education (Literacy), Master of Education (Information Technology), Master of Education (Leadership), Master of Education (Administration), Master of Education (Special Education), Graduate Diploma in Religious Education, Graduate Diploma in Special Education, Certificate of Special Education.

Staff professional development includes the following areas:

**Religious Education:** Religious Literacy Marking, Berakah, Journey; Bethsaida, Restorative Justice; ICLT: TEACHnology, Web Page Development, ICLT Coordinators’ Network; **Literacy:** Language Disorders, Using Data to Improve Literacy Outcomes, Diversifying Learning Experiences; **Mathematics:** Using Data to Improve Numeracy Outcomes; **Executive Development:** Assistant Principal, Religious Education Coordinator and Coordinator Networks; **Special Education:** Utilising GoalView, Clicker 4 Advanced; **PDHPE:** Get Skilled, Get Active; **Library:** Teacher-Librarians Network, Library Conference; **Year 6 to 7 Transition:** Making Links for Transition; **Values Education:** Staff Meetings and Parents’ Forum; **Office Procedures:** School Secretaries’ Network, SAS2000 Rollover Training; **Training for School Support Officers:** School Assistants Classroom training. The majority of staff completed **First Aid and CPR training** and **Anaphylaxis training**.

Staff retention rate was 93% with staff leaving due to promotion and maternity leave.

The average daily staff attendance rate was 97.49%.
School based expenditure on professional learning in 2007 was $7050. 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>Teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised by AEI - NOOSR*</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia within AEI-NOOSR* guidelines but lack formal teacher qualifications</td>
<td>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>
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* Australian Education Institution – National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition

**Culture of the Catholic School**

St Therese School maintains a strong relationship with the parish. Father David O'Brien's leadership and support, Fr Honorio Hincapie's support at liturgies and children's Masses and the support of staff with Parish Sacramental Programs are evidence of this bond. Year 3 prepare for and receive the Sacraments of Penance and First Holy Communion. This year we had fifty seven children from our school participate in this Parish based Program. Year 6 prepare for and receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Forty nine children also undertook this Parish based Program.

All classroom teachers teach Religious Education which is based on the new Religious Education Curriculum. The newly developed Kindergarten to Year 6 RE Curriculum has been implemented.

A climate of co-operation and support across the school was evidenced in our School Review. This focus has been maintained and developed during the year.

The major social justice initiative was our support of the missions. We also supported the St Vincent de Paul Society and Relay for Life in support of cancer research. Activities such as Mufti (Gold Coin) Days and weekly class collections allowed the school to raise in excess of $ 4500.

In term 4 we again supported the St Vincent de Paul Society with a Christmas Food Hamper Drive where each class donated specific items of non-perishable food.

Throughout the year classes were rostered to lead the rest of the school liturgies and celebrations. These liturgies were based on the Church's year or around special and significant events. Hymn singing practice has enhanced these celebrations significantly. A further initiative was the opportunity for each grade to attend and actively participate in a Sunday Parish Mass on one occasion during the year. This has been a great success with many families attending.

Some staff were given the opportunity to attend ministry courses to enhance their own spirituality and increase their understanding of their faith.

Each learning and teaching area displays Catholic icons. Each classroom also has a special sacred space usually a prayer table or similar.

**Student Welfare**

Catholic schools are places of Belonging, Respect and Justice, Hope, Celebration and Quality Learning and Teaching.

They are based on the dignity of the whole person and provide witness to Gospel Values as a means of living out daily life. These values are captured in the Diocesan and Schools’ Pastoral Care Policy. The school-based policy provides information on programs to support students and families, approaches to discipline, creating a safe school environment, codes of conduct and Suspension and Expulsion guidelines.

The centrepiece of Student Welfare is based on the premise that our children are individuals and, as such, our school welfare programs must and do take this into account.

To this end, our Learning and Teaching Community Project, ‘Social and Emotional Resilience to Enhance the Learning Environment’ is having a significant impact on all members of our community, especially our children. There has been an emphasis on Restorative Justice and Practices with the staff using affective questioning to assist in helping children make better choices. In doing so, the children’s teachers have been able to become more attuned and empathetic to the children in their class.
The school has well-established Behaviour Management policies including an Anti-Bullying Policy. Unfortunately, bullying does occur at times, but when this happens elements of the policy are brought into play to bring about positive results.

Significant elements of the Peer Support Program have been used to instruct Year 6 students in their various leadership roles. Year 6 also ‘buddies’ with our Kindergarten to help make sure that the younger children feel as safe and as happy as possible in their first year of schooling.

The positive incentives of class awards and stickers along with a variety of other school awards has been added to with the introduction of the Principal’s Gold and Silver medallions.

Community links are an important part of our Pastoral Care initiative. We have supported the Missions, Caritas and the St Vincent de Paul Society this year.

St Therese Primary School is committed to a safe and supportive environment characterised by fairness, mutual trust, respect and reconciliation. Any parent, student or community member who has a complaint or grievance has the right to have this addressed.

The key elements of the school’s complaints handling procedure and what a community member may do if they have a complaint are detailed in the Diocesan Policy Document.

The Complaints and Grievances Procedures can be found on the Catholic Education Office website: www.ceowoll.catholic.edu.au then go to the link 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 St Therese Parish contributed $9350 for the replacement of the Hall security doors and $4460 for the part purchase and erection of a school sign.

The Parents and Friends were a significant support to the school: $7100 for the hiring of a playground landscape architect; $4460 for the part purchase and erection of a school sign; $1350 for the purchase of new athletics and basketball singlets. In total, the P&F donated around $14000 to the school.

Additionally, the school expended $7300 on the replacement of carpets, $3500 on security alarm upgrading and maintenance, $5300 on electrical work for the new air conditioners, $5400 on furniture and equipment, $5600 on ICLT equipment and maintenance, $2400 on new and replacement sports equipment, over $4000 on the updating of materials for literacy and Reading Recovery and over $19000 on utilities (eg. Electricity, Water). The testing and updating of fire prevention equipment cost over $2100, while the maintenance and repair to buildings and general equipment cost $9000.

The balance carried forward will allow for the purchase of additional and replacement classroom and Library computers with the associated accessories and licences.

The following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for St Therese 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 Therese School is based on the values of respect for each other and an understanding of the positive contribution of each community member. Jesus said “Love one another” and this is what influences the relationships within the school. Sound relationships and a feeling of belonging result in happy people who learn to the best of their ability.

**Curriculum**

Learning & Teaching programs follow Board of Studies requirements and are based on learning outcomes. They are characterised by well-planned learning experiences provided in an emotionally healthy learning environment. The school continues to place considerable emphasis on effective planning, assessing and reporting. Staff are aware of the planning cycle in writing programs of work which cater for all the students in the school. Integration is used effectively to demonstrate the links between different areas of learning. Also, experiences which are linked with real-life allow children to use skills for a purpose.

**Catering for the Individual needs of Students**

Collaboration between Reading Recovery Teachers, Support Teachers, School Support Officers and Class Teachers ensures that support is given to the children who require it, in as efficient a manner as possible, depending on their individual needs. Stakeholders meet at the beginning of each term to review the assistance needed – every child is considered.

Support Staff are part of the learning team for a stage and work in and out of the classroom to allow children to access the curriculum and become more successful in the classroom.

Parent/Teacher/School communication is regular and useful. Both positive and negative issues are dealt with in a timely manner, allowing all parties to have input and listen to each other for the benefit of the child.

**Learning Community Project**

A Learning Community Project centring on Emotional Intelligence and the nurturing of resilience in students has been in action since 2005 with the aim of improving learning outcomes. This has informed all members of the school community and continues to shape the culture of the school. In 2007, our third year of the project, relationship building was the focus. The Marist Youth Care team was invited to train Year 6 students, teachers, parents and the school leadership team in the skills of Restorative Practices. The main philosophy of this is that when there is conflict, it is important to take steps to solve the conflict and repair relationships at the same time. It goes to the heart of our school motto “Love Can Do All Things”. All staff members are practising the techniques which we have learned this year.

**Excursions and Incursions**

It is recognised that learning and life are inseparable. Therefore, a range of excursions is undertaken throughout the grades to link classroom learning with real life. These are educationally based, carefully planned (including risk assessment) and age-appropriate. In 2007 Kindergarten has spent a day at Australian Wildlife World at Darling Harbour. Year 1 has visited Symbio Wildlife Park and Year 2 has enjoyed a day at Glengarry Cottage learning about recycling. A visit to Nan Tien Temple helped Year 3 with its understanding of people and their beliefs, while Year 4 went to the Sydney Observatory and the IMAX Theatre to learn about space. The senior students in Year 5 expanded their knowledge of life in the goldfields with a visit to Mogo and Year 6 has spent 2 days studying Government, History and Art in Canberra.

Incursions take place each year, bringing a variety of visitors to St Therese School to share their talents and skills with the children. These change from year to year depending upon long-term school plans (Renewal Plan) and short-term needs. In 2007 Brainstorm Productions has visited to share their Brave Heart Program with all students (links with Learning Communities Project) and Sam Saad has brought his ‘Body on the Line’ Program to assist with Maths concepts. A guest speaker, Adrianna Haro spoke to all of the children during Mission Week as we need to care for others as Jesus has shown us.

**Extra-curricular Activities**

In 2007, a program of ‘Elective Groups’ has been trialled. For several weeks each term, on Friday afternoons, children are given the opportunity to enhance their skills in a variety
of areas including Debating, Chess, Dance, Photography, Scrabble, Tournament of Minds, Choir, Skipping, Drawing, Painting, Italian and Environmental.

The program provides an opportunity for the children to choose their own learning areas depending upon their interests and talents, but it also allows teachers to use their own talents more fully. Very good feedback was received from the children and we hope to continue and fine-tune the program in 2008.

During the year students have participated in enrichment days organised by the Central Catholic Schools Precinct. These covered the areas of Information Technology, Maths, Literacy, Debating and Creative Arts. The Debating Workshop Day was held at St Therese. Two teams of seven children entered the Tournament of Minds this year and twenty four students took part in the Illawarra One-day Chess Tournament. The School Choir has performed at the Wollongong Eisteddfod, achieving 1st Place in Hymn Singing, at the Fraternity Club Christmas Night and at Carols in the Mall. During the year, individual students and classes participated in competitions such as the Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Competition and the Just Imagine Writing Competition run by the Wollongong Art Gallery.

All students prepare speeches for the school Public Speaking Competition, from which one student in Year 5 and one student in Year 6 represent the school at the Regional and then Diocesan Competitions. This year we celebrated the first place received by our Year 5 representative.

Use of Technology as a Learning Tool

Staff and students at St Therese School are fortunate to have 19 iBook laptops which were generously purchased by the Parents & Friends Association. Every classroom also has at least one new desktop computer. A workable roster has been set up and the laptops are used continually by both students and staff. The IT Committee regularly reviews the needs of the school and plans accordingly.

Library

Library is an integrated part of learning for the children at St Therese. Regular Library Planning days are held during which teachers are released from class to plan with librarians the best way for Library to support classroom learning. Both literary and technological skills are taught during Library lessons. Bookweek is a highlight of the year. This year the slogan ReaDiscover was used by classes to design and make displays for the Library. Children (and teachers) enjoyed dressing up as their favourite book characters and the teachers enjoyed acting out one of the short-listed Book Council books. Author visits give insight into the process of writing and enjoying books and in 2007 St Therese was privileged to host Boorea Pryor, an indigenous author who made a big impact on all the children. Kindergarten children take part in the Premier’s Reading Challenge. To allow greater access to the Library for recreation and research, the Library is open for half of lunchtime.

Sport and Physical Education

A large proportion of the children at St Therese enjoy being active, so P.E. and Sport are favourite activities. A specialist P.E. teacher, with assistance from class teachers, teaches skills to all classes every week. Class teachers then use these skills in games during Sport time. The school holds annual Athletics, Cross Country and Swimming Carnivals, the best achievers of each of these then moving on to the Regional and the Diocesan Carnivals.

Students have the opportunity to trial for MacKillop teams in all the major sports and several students have been successful this year.

There is also a commitment to non-competitive sport. Teams have attended Gala Days in Soccer, Netball, Basketball, Dragon Tag and Cricket. These days are purely for the fun of playing and participation, and allow some children to try sports which they haven’t played before.

Assessment and Reporting

Assessment is an integral part of learning and teaching. It occurs as a natural part of the learning cycle, before, during and after teaching. A wide variety of assessment tasks are undertaken: written, oral, performance and observation. A number of assessment tasks combine to provide teachers and students with a clear picture of progress which is then communicated to parents using the A-E reporting system and Parent-Teacher Interviews.
**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 53 Year 3 and 51 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: 4% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 34% of students in Band 5. The best performance was in Writing, followed by Reading and Language.

Numeracy: 15% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 29% 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 74% of students in Bands 5 and 6. The best performance was in Writing, followed by Reading and Language.

Numeracy: 0% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 72% 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.

**National Benchmarks**

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year 3 2005</th>
<th>Year 3 2006</th>
<th>Year 3 2007</th>
<th>Year 5 2005</th>
<th>Year 5 2006</th>
<th>Year 5 2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>98</td>
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<td>Writing</td>
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<td>97</td>
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<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: National Benchmarks not included have not yet been published
Parent, Student and Staff Satisfaction

100% of respondents from parents, students and staff believe that the school helps the children in their understanding of the Catholic faith. 99% of the students are proud of their school. 97% of the students feel that their teacher encourages them to learn to the best of their ability, whereas 86% of parents agree that the school strives to meet the individual learning needs of their child. 92% of parents agree that the teachers are genuinely interested in the welfare of their child. While 92% of students feel safe at school, this indicates that some children feel unsafe at times. The school’s emphasis on restorative justice and practices will hopefully have a positive effect on this over time.

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.

- Ensure that quality learning and teaching pedagogy remains the focus for all teachers.
- Continue to strengthen the links already forged between the Parish, School, home and wider communities.
- Initiate work on the new School Review and Improvement process.

Progress in 2007 Towards Achievements of School Renewal Plan

- Scope and sequence of outcomes in all KLA’s have been developed.
- ‘A – E’ Reports have been further refined in response to changes to Federal Government policy.
- Shared leadership responsibilities within the Leadership Team established.

Priorities for 2008

- Preparatory work on the new School Review and Improvement process in light of the School Review recommendations.
- Development of the Learning Community Project: ‘Divide and Conquer Maths in the Classroom’.
- Evaluation of the school’s many pastoral care programs to ensure that they remain relevant and manageable.

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          Chris Miller
Director of Schools    Principal