Annual School Report 2007

Vision Statement
Saint Francis Xavier’s Catholic Primary School is a holistic and collaborative learning community, which is based on the person of Jesus. The uniqueness of each individual is developed and celebrated, leading to a future filled with hope and opportunity.

Principal’s Message
St Francis Xavier’s School has had a very productive year. Building on the strong tradition of our Catholic school, students had the opportunity to enrich their faith and learning through varied experiences. The continuing positive partnership between the School, Parish and home helped us build on our successes, challenged us to continuously improve and celebrated the wonderful people who make up our community.

Parent Involvement
Parental involvement was outstanding and positive. Parent volunteers continued to provide support with learning programs, school activities, Parish and Diocesan liturgies and celebrations as well as raising funds to support school initiatives. The major fund raising event was the School Fete which was successful financially and promoted community spirit.

Student Leadership
As the Year 6 students, we participated in leadership committees. We assisted with school events and offered suggestions to improve our school environment. Opportunities were given to develop new skills which will help us with the challenges in our lives while developing our decision making skills. It was a privilege to be a school leader. We enjoyed our time at St Francis Xavier’s Parish School because it is a safe and supportive environment where we are encouraged to be leaders of tomorrow.
(School Captains 2007)

School Profile
Saint Francis Xavier Parish School was opened in 1838, under the same patronage as the Cathedral Parish and is the oldest school in the Wollongong Diocese. The Sisters of the Good Samaritan were the founding order of the school. In 1910 a new school was built on the site where the school is located today. In 1951 further additions to the school began and in 1953, Bishop McCabe blessed and opened the new buildings. The school expanded again in 1972 with the addition of an administration block, six new classrooms and a new library. Today, the school continues the fine tradition of our early years, providing quality education for our students. The school is now administered by the Wollongong Catholic Education Office and is under the jurisdiction of the Bishop.

Our school crest reflects the life work and the motto of our patron saint, Saint Francis Xavier, a missionary who lived and worked in Asia in the 1500’s.
The school’s motto “In Hoc Signo Vinces” meaning “In This Sign We Conquer”, challenges our school to be a faith community, which promotes Gospel values and teachings. We aim to be a school community where the person of Jesus is at the centre of our lives, and where we create a collaborative and supportive environment which recognises and develops the individuality of each member of our school community. Saint Francis Xavier’s Parish School strives to be a community where we promote a commitment to the service of others as a basic expression of the Christian message.
Student Enrolments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>225</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Student Attendance for 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>92.1</td>
<td>88.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The enrolment policy and procedures can be found on the Catholic Education Office website: [www.ceo.woll.catholic.edu.au](http://www.ceo.woll.catholic.edu.au) and then go to the link Policy.

The average daily student attendance rate for 2007 was 90.2 %

Staffing Profile

Teaching Staff

The staff at St Francis Xavier’s Parish School consisted of seventeen teachers.

School Leadership

The six members of the Leadership Team included the Principal, Assistant Principal, two Religious Education Co-ordinators, Co-ordinator Two and Co-ordinator One.

Classroom and Specialist Teachers

There were ten full time class teachers and seven part time teachers. Specialist support teachers worked in the areas of Library, Literacy and Numeracy, Reading Recovery, Music and Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

School Support Officers

The school has ten School Support Officers. Seven Support Officers worked as specialist Support Officers in our Special Education Units and three staff provided administrative support in the school office and in classrooms.

Teaching Staff Experience

The Staff of St Francis Xavier’s Parish School has a range of teaching experience with eight teachers having taught for more than twenty years, and three teachers with post graduate qualifications. Five of the current teaching staff have Reading Recovery training and experience teaching this program.

Staff Retention

At the end of the 2007 school year 12% of staff will leave the school. One staff member will be involved in professional teaching exchange in 2008.

Staff Attendance

The average daily staff attendance rate for 2007 was 96.57 %

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>%</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>
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</tbody>
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*Australian Education Institution – National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition

Professional Learning

Professional learning experiences for teaching staff during 2007 focused on specific areas including Literacy and Numeracy, Assessment, Spirituality, Diversifying the Curriculum, Rethinking Safe and Supportive Environments, Leadership, Seasons for Growth, Anaphylaxis, Resuscitation, Emergency Care and Review Panels.

During 2007 one of our key focus areas was to support teachers in promoting child centred learning through Action Learning Projects involving teachers and students. These projects encouraged students to reflect on their experiences and plan for future learning. Staff worked in teams which provided opportunities for collaborative planning and professional dialogue. This ensured that the expertise of our talented teachers was utilised allowing staff to develop best practice in their classrooms.

Our other key focus area was the collaborative development and implementation of an improved safe and supportive environment. This was achieved through the review and development of the school’s Pastoral Care Policy and supporting documents. The Staff were also in-serviced in Restorative Justice principles which assisted them in the implementation of the school’s Pastoral Care Policy.

School based expenditure on professional learning in 2007 was $3715. This is in addition to expenditure on professional learning opportunities provided by the Catholic Education Office.
Culture of the Catholic School

Our Catholic identity is embedded into the daily life of our school as we teach through word and action the values of the Good Samaritans, Love of God, Love of Learning, Stewardship, Hospitality and Peace. Our school has embraced the teaching of our patron, St Francis Xavier to “be great in little things.”

On entering our school the physical presence of Religious icons, sacred spaces and displays are the first indication that our school is a Catholic community.

The Parish-School relationship continues to grow and strengthen through collaboration with our Bishop, Parish Dean, and all within the school community. The staff and parents of the school were involved in the planning and organisation of all School- Parish events and also assisted with Diocesan events that were celebrated at the Cathedral. A Parish School Mass was celebrated each term followed by a BBQ.

Prayer played an important part in the everyday life of our school community. The school maintained a prayer space in the Cathedral meeting room and this was used for weekly staff prayer organised by the Spiritual Animators Team who trained this year. Classes had a prayer space which reflected the seasons of the Church year and enhanced daily class prayer. The school community prayed together on many occasions including school assemblies, Liturgies for special occasions including Palm Sunday, Easter, ANZAC Day and 150 year celebration of the Sisters of the Good Samaritans and Christmas.

Students participated daily in formal Religion lessons following the Wollongong Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum. This Curriculum is the basis for Religious Education lessons throughout the Diocese. It incorporates effective strategies to make learning more meaningful for the students by relating learning experiences to their daily lives. Year 4 students completed the Diocesan Religious Literacy Assessment tasks.

Our links with our ‘sister’ school St Brigid’s were maintained during 2007. At the beginning of the year staff from both schools gathered to celebrate Mass and throughout the year worked with the Parish to organise Sacramental Parent Information evenings, Preparation Days and Masses.

Student Welfare

The staff of St Francis Xavier’s Parish School endeavoured to create a safe and supportive environment, reflecting our Catholic values, the National Safe Schools Framework and Values Education for Australian Schools.

The staff recognised the need for supporting the transition of students between Stages and addressed this issue by implementing various programs. Students were involved in the PALS Kindergarten Program, buddy programs for Infants and Primary students and the Year Six transition to high school program, ‘Hit the Ground Running’. The Life Education Program was also conducted during Term Three.

Centacare remains an integral part of student welfare, working with teaching staff to support the needs of students and parents. Our Centacare Counsellor works a half day per week.

A school focus in 2007 was the review and development of our Pastoral Care Policy. It was identified that our Behaviour Management and Bullying and Harassment policies needed to be reviewed. The principles of Restorative Justice have been woven into policies under the Pastoral Care banner.

The implementation of Restorative Justice Principles has been achieved through the contribution of guest speakers, parent information, presentations, staff development and in-servicing. Staff and parent collaborative planning resulted in reflection and the designing of a specific action plan to support further direction for 2008.

To support Pastoral Care, a number of programs were implemented to best assist in the care and safety of our students and staff. These included a new dismissal plan, playground supervision guide, effective questioning lanyards, school rules signage, a restorative “4 Step” plan for students, a focus on National Safe Schools Week and new security fencing.

Student leadership teams promoted and supported the values of the school by being proactive in the school and wider community. These teams focused on the areas of Stewardship, Social Justice, Hospitality, Information Communication Technology and Sport. Practical tasks and goals were set by each committee, and with the support of staff members each team worked collaboratively and effectively to achieve these aims.
St Francis Xavier’s Parish School has two Special Education Units as part of our school community. Students from these units are included in all aspects of school life and contribute to the enrichment of our school ‘culture’.

The school promoted an awareness of the importance of healthy eating habits and our canteen implemented healthy eating alternatives to support healthy life-styles.

The Complaints and Grievances Procedures can be found on the Catholic Education Office website: www.ceowoll.catholic.edu.au then go 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 policies and guidelines can be obtained by contacting the school office and by visiting our school website: www.sfx.woll.catholic.edu.au

**Financial Summary**

Refurbishment of our school library was a major cost this year. Work completed included new carpet, shelving and painting. Other school improvements included new carpet for the Stage Three classrooms, new cupboards for storage in Learning Centre Blue and the Music Room. The upgrading of toilet areas improved these amenities for school and parish use. Our local contribution totalled $26,121 which was serviced by the Parish SEDSO account. During the year, the school received financial support to the value of $54,140 from Wollongong Catholic Education Office to provide fencing on the Cathedral site.

The Parents and Friends Association has continued its valuable support of the school, providing significant funds which contributed to a wide range of initiatives. Funds raised came from activities such as the school fete, pie drive, car parking and trivia night. Further funding from the School Golf Day and local organisations’ grants allowed for the purchase of technology resources and improvements to the Special Education learning space.

Our six year contract with Program Maintenance is in its fifth year. Annual work was undertaken to maintain the school buildings. The annual Occupational, Health and Safety requirement of testing and tagging electrical equipment throughout the school was also completed.

The following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for St Francis Xavier’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

Introduction
At St Francis Xavier’s we focus on the individual learning of each child. Through our learning and teaching programs, we provided students with opportunities for enrichment, consolidation and remediation, especially in areas of Literacy and Numeracy. Students were also given opportunities to access various Information Communication Technologies to enhance their learning. The staff recognised that differentiating learning experiences and integration of curriculum were critical strategies to accommodate the crowded curriculum allowing students to develop skills across all Key Learning Areas.

Curriculum and Pedagogy

Syllabus Implementation
Our students have been provided with courses of study in order to achieve Board of Studies stated outcomes.

Our school’s goals and priorities this year have been to:

- improve curriculum through open-ended tasks, differentiated learning and integration in Key Learning Areas
- incorporate Information Technology and Communication (ICT) to enrich learning and teaching through Action Learning Projects
- purchase Information Communication Technology resources to support this initiative across all stages

Assessment and Reporting
Assessment and reporting has again been a priority due to the requirements of the Federal Government’s A-E reporting system. The school developed a core data base to support the monitoring of student learning across all stages. Assessment tasks have been both curriculum based and standardised. Assessment practices have been monitored to ensure a close link between what is programmed, taught and assessed. Teachers have continued to develop school assessment scope and sequences. Student assessment profiles continued to be maintained and used throughout the school. Staff also participated in stage meetings with our local precinct to share ideas about student assessment.

Integration
Teachers have adopted a whole school approach to the planning and implementation of an integrated curriculum. This has allowed teachers and students to explore the curriculum providing diverse and meaningful learning activities.

Technology Supporting Learning
To facilitate optimum learning opportunities and to achieve student outcomes the school’s Information Communication Technology plan was continually revisited. The staff developed their technology skills through collaboratively working with each other in team teaching situations, sharing their skills. Through our Learning Communities Project, teachers had the opportunity for professional learning sessions to further develop Information Communication Technology skills, plan programmes and to engage in professional dialogue to improve student outcomes. Purchase of resources, including digital cameras, macbooks, movie camera and i-pods supported student learning. Staff were committed to using myclasses to support student learning and to inform parents of learning experiences.

Cross-Curriculum
Literacy continues to be a high priority for students with teaching staff involved in ongoing professional learning opportunities to deliver the most effective learning for students. Through our Action Learning Projects, teachers have endeavoured to embed technology authentically to enhance learning experiences. The Reading Recovery Programme also was implemented in Stage 1 to support Literacy learning.

Numeracy was also a priority and will continue to be a focus in 2008. The Count Me In Too Mathematics Programme was embedded in learning and teaching experiences across Early Stage and Stage One.

An Indigenous Education Plan was formulated in the context of the Diocesan Indigenous Education Policy. The plan identified students of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander decent and ensured that their learning needs were met.

All students, with the support of an indigenous artist had the opportunity to be involved in the painting of a school mural. Celebrations also took place to acknowledge Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week heightening student’s awareness of our indigenous heritage.
Learning & Teaching

Meeting the Needs of all Students

Diversifying Learning

A major initiative during 2007 was the extension and implementation of Action Learning Projects with students across all stages. Action Learning is based on child centred learning. Students are given the opportunity to articulate the skills and strategies they have learnt and are encouraged to be reflective on their own learning. Through careful planning and programming, teachers provided a range of learning experiences to cater for the diverse needs of students in their classes.

The Review Committee provided support for students and teachers by monitoring students with specific learning needs in Literacy and Numeracy. The school’s resource teachers provided additional support to students who have been identified through the School Review process. School Support Officers were also assigned to classrooms to assist with meeting the diverse needs of all students. The school also offered the Reading Recovery Program which is designed to support students requiring assistance with Literacy.

Special Education

Our school has two Special Education Units, providing the opportunity for students with learning needs to be supported in our school community. Each term parents met with the special education and class teacher to develop goals and set outcomes to meet the specific needs of each student. Goalview was used to design Individual Education Plans (IEP’s) to meet the needs of all Special Education students. These plans incorporate personal outcomes for the students in Literacy, Numeracy and Personal Development. Students were also integrated daily into their mainstream classes. Integration time provided enriched academic and social learning opportunities for all students. Students from both Learning Centre classes participated in school sport activities, the ‘Ready Sport Programme’ conducted by the Wollongong Disability Trust and represented the school at Diocesan carnivals.

Gifted Education

Each term, students from Stage Three were given the opportunity to attend curriculum enrichment days at three local precinct schools. The students were engaged in a variety of challenging experiences in the curriculum areas of Numeracy, Effective Writing Strategies, Debating and Creative Arts. During Terms Three and Four, students from Stages 2 and 3 were given the opportunity to participate in a weekly school based enrichment program to challenge and develop their higher order thinking skills. These individual and group activities provided students with open-ended tasks, developing their problem solving, creative and critical thinking skills.

Expanded Learning Opportunities

Students across all Stages competed in the Choir section of the Wollongong Eisteddfod achieving excellent results. Students in Stages 2 and 3 were also given the opportunity to perform in the School Choir at a variety of events, including the monthly Parish luncheon, Sacramental celebrations and Carols in the Mall.

Competitions

Students are given opportunities to extend themselves academically through participation in the University of NSW Australasian Schools Competitions, Public Speaking Competitions where one student was awarded second place and the Christmas Card Design Art Competition. Students also participated in the Wollongong Catholic Education Office Book Week writing competition where one student reached the final.

Sport

Students participated in weekly sport and physical activities with all students encouraged to be involved in school based sporting carnivals. All students were encouraged to participate in the school swimming, cross country and athletics carnivals, fostering the development of school spirit. Many students had the opportunity to participate in Diocesan Gala Days and selected school teams represented our community at Diocesan carnivals. Two students received awards
from the Diocesan Sports Council recognising their achievements at local and state level.

Student Achievement
The school uses a variety of assessment strategies at key points in the learning framework. These include teacher observation, student portfolios, projects and presentations. Students in Year 3 and 5 participated in the state-wide Basic Skills Test. The purpose of this test is to provide information to parents and teachers about the achievements of students in aspects of Literacy and Numeracy. The test provides a measure of students’ performance against established standards. Results assist the school in 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 25 Year 3 and 24 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: 13% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 13% of students in Band 5. The best performance was in Language, followed by Writing and Reading.

Numeracy: 32% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 16% of students in Band 5. The best performance was in Number, Patterns and Algebra, followed by Measurement, Data and Space.

Year 5
Literacy: 0% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 54% of students in Bands 5 and 6. The best performance was in Language, followed by Writing and Reading.

Numeracy: 0% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 58% of students in Bands 5 and 6. The best performance was in Measurement and Data, followed by Space and Geometry and Number, Patterns and Algebra.

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>96</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</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 and bring about positive change and growth. The following key focus areas were identified by the school. The School Renewal Plan generally sets directions for a period of 3 – 5 years and is subject to regular evaluations.

Progress in 2007 Towards Achievements of School Renewal Plan

- Enhancement of staff spirituality and faith formation through prayer. Staff professional development in the Spirituality Animators Program supported this initiative.
- The Learning Community Project (LCP) that focused on the area of Literacy and the use of Learning Technology to support the development of teacher and student knowledge and skills.
- Staff participated in professional learning (Re-Thinking Safe and Supportive Environments) as a basis for revisiting our Pastoral Care and Behaviour Management Policies and Procedures reflecting restorative practices. A Drug and Values Education Forum was conducted.
- Successful implementation of the School Health Incentive Project (SHIP) ‘Let’s Get Physical’ supported classroom teachers with equipment and direction for more varied physical activities.
- Continuation of staff committees undertaking responsibilities across the school community including the development of annual action plans and preparation for our School Review.
- Review by teaching staff of school based assessment to track student’s academic learning.
- Australian Commonwealth Government ‘Investing in Our Schools Program Grant’ to purchase Learning Technology resources, musical instruments and sporting equipment.

Priorities for 2008

- Staff to develop an understanding and ownership of the School Review and Improvement Framework allowing our school community to take forward continued improvement.
- Varied professional learning opportunities for staff, students and parents to be facilitated by the Marist Youth Care Team embedding Restorative Justice Principles in the school community.
- Promotion of and involvement in Diocesan World Youth Day celebrations.
- Implementation of the school’s newly developed Behaviour Management Policy. Review and further development of our Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy.
- Continuation of our Learning Community Project (Action Learning) to embed Information Communication Technology authentically into the curriculum, challenging pedagogy and improving student learning outcomes.
- Implementation of the School Health Incentive Project (SHIP) providing opportunities for the development of Stage Three Student Leadership skills.

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

Fran James
Principal