Holy Cross
Catholic Primary School
Helensburgh

Annual School Report
2008
About This Report

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, Helensburgh is registered by the Board of Studies (NSW) and managed by the Catholic Education Office (CEO), Wollongong, the ‘approved authority’ for the Registration System formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act 1990.

The Annual School Report provides the school community with fair, reliable and objective information about school performance measures and policies, as determined by the Minister for Education. The Report also outlines information about initiatives and developments of major interest and importance to the school community during the year and the achievements arising from the implementation of the School’s Annual Action Plan. Following its submission to the Board of Studies, the Report will be available on the school’s website by 30 June 2009.

The Report demonstrates accountability to regulatory bodies, the school community and the Catholic Education Office, Diocese of Wollongong. This Report has been approved by the Director of Schools to ensure compliance with all NSW Board of Studies requirements for Registration.

Further information about the school or this report may be obtained by contacting the school:

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School
1 McMillan St
Helensburgh NSW 2508
Ph:  (02) 4294 1588
Fax:   (02) 4294 3473
Email: info@holycross.woll.catholic.edu.au

Parish Priest: Fr Patrick Vaughan

Principal:  Mrs Mary Bryant

Date:  12 December 2008
Vision Statement

Holy Cross is a Catholic Primary School that strives to create a learning environment based on Gospel Values. We encourage students to achieve to their full potential in academic, spiritual, social and sporting areas so they can take their place as full members of the wider community.

Message from Key School Bodies

Principal’s Message
The 2008 school year has been another successful year for the school community of Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, Helensburgh. The Annual School Report clearly illustrates the vast array of learning opportunities and the many successes and achievements of our students. At Holy Cross we strive to work and collaborate with parents in fostering positive relationships which support child centred learning and assist in developing the whole child. On behalf of the staff and students I offer my sincere thanks for your support of the school during 2008 and I especially acknowledge Father Patrick for his constant support, leadership and love of the children of Holy Cross.

Parent Involvement
The parents of Holy Cross play a vital role in the life of our school and are encouraged to become involved in their children’s education. Parents are engaged in classroom activities, social events and assisting the teachers with sporting events and excursions. In addition there has been invaluable support given to our school Canteen from our wonderful Canteen coordinator and Canteen volunteers.

Our P&F Association has also been very active this year with various fund raising events including the Annual School Fete, Mother’s Day and Father’s Day Stalls and an awesome Twilight Movie Night, assisting the school to purchase a new school sign to be erected in 2009, Information Communication Learning Technologies (ICLT) equipment and library resources. Parent support is crucial to the life of the school and successful fundraising allows the parent body to make a significant financial contribution to the school, as well as assisting in maintaining a positive climate amongst the school community. Parents participated in fundraising for the school with pride, knowing that their efforts helped make quality Catholic education a continuing reality within the school.

Parents and Friends Association, President

Student Leadership
Our Student Leadership at Holy Cross has played an important role in many ways. We have lead by example, had a positive influence on the behaviour of younger students and aided in creating a welcoming and supportive school environment.

We were able to experience leadership through the participation in four of the eight Leadership groups. The Restorative Justice Program and the Team Building and Leadership Day both had a positive influence on our understanding of leadership and our contribution as leaders.

School Captains
School Profile

Holy Cross is situated in the northern most suburb of Wollongong. It is primarily a single stream school that caters for the Helensburgh, Stanwell Tops, Stanwell Park and Otford areas. Due to its physical isolation, surrounded by national parks, Helensburgh is a very close knit community.

As a systemic, Catholic school within the Diocese of Wollongong, it is an integral part of the Catholic parish of Helensburgh. Holy Cross School was founded in 1900 and run by the Sisters of St Joseph up until 1982 when the Religious Principal was replaced by the first lay Principal.

Holy Cross is a school community committed to the Catholic ethos, values and traditions. The spiritual growth and welfare of each student, along with sound educational practices is a shared responsibility of the Parish Priest, Principal, staff and parents under the supervision of both Catholic and Government educational authorities.

Student Enrolments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>189</td>
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The Enrolment Policy and Procedures can be found on the Catholic Education Website: www.ceowoll.catholic.edu.au then go to the link Policies.

Student Attendance for 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>94.2%</td>
<td>95.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Staffing Profile

There are a total of 14 teachers at Holy Cross School. There are 7 full-time teachers and 7 part-time teachers who are responsible not only for the 8 home-room classes but also for the Music, Library, Italian and Reading Recovery Programs that run throughout the school. At Holy Cross there are 4 specialist support staff and 2 administrative support staff, one full-time and one part-time, who complement the classroom teachers.
School Leadership
The school is administered by a Leadership Team comprising the Principal, Assistant Principal, Religious Education Coordinator, a teachers in a Middle Leader 2 position and a teacher in a Middle Leader 1 position.

Specialist Teachers
Holy Cross enjoys the privilege of specialist teaching for both Italian and Music. All students have one Italian lesson per week from one of the two part-time Italian teachers employed at the school. In music, each class has lessons for one semester each year from the part-time Music teacher.

Teaching Staff Experience
At Holy Cross there has been a balance of experience teachers and early career teachers and in 2008, 43% of the staff had 20 or more years teaching experience, 36% had between 10 and 20 years experience and a further 21% with less than 10 years experience.

All staff have completed some form of post-graduate study, 100% of these involving the participation in a Religious Education qualification, 75% completing a Graduate Diploma in Education or higher and 14% completing a Masters in Educational Leadership.

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

| Teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised by AEI - NOOSR* | 100% |
| Have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia within AEI-NOSR* guidelines but lack formal teacher qualifications | % |
| Do not have qualifications as above but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context | % |

*Australian Education Institution – National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition Staff Retention

Staff Attendance
The average daily staff attendance rate for 2008 was 97.53%.

The staff retention rate is high at Holy Cross with 79% of the teaching staff remaining for the 2008 School Year.
Professional Learning

Professional learning opportunities are highly valued and sought by all members of Holy Cross school staff. During 2008 school personnel undertook a range of professional learning activities related to improving student outcomes.

These included Holy Cross whole school development days involving 14 staff. These days focussed on:
- Restorative Justice;
- Assessment, Reporting & Programming;
- Goal Setting; and,
- School Review & Improvement processes.

Other Professional Learning activities provided at school level, including course conducted through the Wollongong Catholic Education Office (CEO) focused on:
- Diocesan Learning and Teaching Framework;
- ICLT;
- School Review & Improvement processes;
- RE Literacy;
- Assessment & Reporting in Maths;
- Unpacking NAPLAN Results;
- Behaviour Management; and,
- Science.

The average expenditure by the school on professional learning per teacher was $640. In addition, professional learning opportunities were provided by the Catholic Education Office with an additional average expenditure per teacher of $900.00

Culture of the Catholic School

During 2008, the Parish Priest, Staff and Parents of Holy Cross have continued to share the responsibility for the spiritual growth, welfare and education of the students. Liturgical celebrations continued to provide opportunities for the school to celebrate the community’s commitment to Christ, looking to Him as the spiritual guide. To this end students and staff joined parishioners regularly for Mass, and to celebrate special feast days.

Throughout the year, significant Church and community occasions – ANZAC Day, World Environment Day, Grandparents Day, Remembrance Day, Cross & Icon and World Youth Day - were commemorated with special assemblies or liturgies. There were also opportunities for Stage and school Masses, Reconciliation and Benediction, class visits by Father Patrick, whole school prayer, Mission Week, and celebration of Feast Days such as the Parish feast of Holy Cross and Blessed Mary MacKillop’s feast day.

The school has involved itself in parish celebrations such as the Cross & Icon, Family Masses and most importantly the Parish Sacramental Program. This year 18 children receive the Sacrament of Penance for the first time, 21 children received First Eucharist and 18 children received the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Staff continued their faith formation through
weekly communal prayer and a Spirituality Day at The Abbey at Jamberoo, which centred on their own personal spiritual development.

In Term 3, Senior Stage 3 spent a day at Doran House at Stanwell Park focussing on Christian Leadership in preparation for Confirmation. Following the legacy of the school’s Foundress, Blessed Mary McKillop, “Never see a need without doing something about it” the school continued the support of those less fortunate by donating money raised through whole school activities led and organised by Stage 3 students. The school also supported the winter clothing appeal and the Christmas Hamper appeal for St Vincent de Paul. Instead of exchanging presents this year, the Staff has donated the money to Caritas.

**Student Welfare**

Staff members at Holy Cross are committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for the school community. In 2008 the Pastoral Care and Discipline Policy ensured that the school reflected the National Safe School’s Framework, characterised by fairness, mutual trust, respect and reconciliation. (Access to all Policies and Guidelines can be obtained by contacting the school office.)

A range of programs have been implemented to support the students including Protective Behaviours, Behaviour Management, Healthy Canteen, Sun Safety and Fire Awareness, and Water Safety. Drug Education is part of the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education Program and is taught in all grades. The Life Education program was once again a great success.

A Centacare counsellor worked at the school one day per fortnight and provided student counselling when required. The Stage 3 students were supported in their preparation for High School with involvement in a Primary Schools Engagement Program with St John Bosco College. The Pals Program was integrated into Kinder and Stage 1 again in 2008. The buddy system operating between Kindergarten and Stage 3 students continued and played a valuable role in assisting the transition into school for the Kindergarten students.

The Mission Week activities organised by the Stage 3 Leadership teams provided an invaluable experience for all students. The range of activities, from Jellybean Guessing Competition, Soccer Shootouts and an Internet cafe certainly captured the imagination and enjoyment of all students and teachers.

The school rules, including the anti bullying policies and procedures, were reviewed during the year with a greater emphasis being placed on consistent rules being applied throughout the whole school. Positive behaviour was recognised through the Green Card Awards, Playground Awards and Principal Awards. As well, student achievements are acknowledged through the school Merit Award System. Students in Stages 2 & 3 were involved in a Star Rewards Program, providing positive reinforcement for appropriate behaviours.

“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.
Financial Summary

The Parents and Friends Association was again very generous with their support, allocating $19,000 toward the purchase of Information Technology Equipment, support of the school Library and support of buses and expenses for sport, as well as school maintenance.

Holy Cross was fortunate to receive several grants this year. The Commonwealth Government Investing in Our Schools Program provided $22,513 for the school, which was used to purchase new laptops, i-macs and a storage trolley for the laptops. The local Helensburgh Mine donated $10,000 this year which will be used for inclusions in the new classrooms to be constructed in 2009. The Thirroul Lions Club donated $2000 as a result of Holy Cross contributing a mural to the Thirroul Seaside Festival this year and $2000 was also donated by parents as contributions towards the school football teams.

The following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for Holy Cross for the year ended 31 December 2008. This data is taken from the 2008 financial return to the Australian Government, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.
Learning & Teaching

Introduction
Quality Catholic Learning and Teaching is a fundamental priority at Holy Cross School. In 2008, the school’s focus areas and initiatives have reflected Diocesan and National priorities to promote quality learning opportunities for all students.

Curriculum and Pedagogy
Throughout 2008, significant learning and growth has occurred for both students and staff. Board of studies requirements and courses in Religious Education have been attended to in accordance with Diocesan Policy. In 2008 there has been encouragement and support for students to be more responsible for their own learning. Inquiry based learning and personal interest projects involving all areas of the Curriculum have been a feature of many classrooms throughout the school. The use of Bloom’s Taxonomy, Multiple Intelligence Matrix and Gardner’s Thinking Hats in most classes has broadened the learning spectrum and allowed teachers to experiment with more diverse teaching strategies. Continued co-operative planning within stage groups allows for teacher expertise and support to influence better student outcomes.

Assessment and Reporting was a big focus this year. This resulted in the design of programs more appropriate to the needs of the students. Staff focussed on developing goal setting strategies for both teachers and students in the learning/teaching cycle, resulting in the design of programs more appropriate to the needs of students.

Technology Supporting Learning
The year has seen continued progress in the area of developing ICLT in classrooms. The financial commitment made by the school, the P&F and the Australian Government, in providing the necessary hardware and peripheral tools has continued, culminating with the installation of 2 Smart Boards at the end of the year.

Cross-Curriculum
The promotion of Literacy learning is part of the school’s vision of excellence in education, the current Literacy Plan was implemented throughout the year and funds were provided for the purchase of resources to assist in the Literacy development of students from K-6.

Teachers are continuing to implement the 2004 Mathematics Syllabus and are supported with relevant professional development and staff meetings. Emphasis this year has centred on goal setting for both staff and students. Classroom teaching has continued to be influenced by the “Count Me In Too” program, now embedded in the Early Stage 1, Stage 1 and Stage 2 programs. Students are carefully monitored and tracked to ensure that they are learning developmentally and are challenged by their learning experiences.

Indigenous Education at Holy Cross permeates the whole curriculum, with a specific emphasis given in Human Society and its Environment (HSIE). The integration of Literacy, Creative Arts, Science, Religion, HSIE, Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE), Maths and Library in Integrated Units of work has ensured that all outcomes are covered in a varied, interesting and relevant manner.
Holy Cross is privileged to have both Italian and Music specialists at the school, exposing the students to an even broader range of cultural experiences.

**Meeting the Needs of All Students**

The learning needs of all students at Holy Cross are a priority. Teachers cater for a wide range of abilities through careful planning and programming. Throughout the stages there is regular tracking of students’ development in Literacy and Numeracy and this forms the basis for the appropriate grouping of students in Literacy and Numeracy. As well, the use of tiered lessons and a greater knowledge of the learning continuum for each outcome, has enabled teachers to cater more effectively for the needs of the students. The school also has a targeted program that caters for the needs of specific students in need of extra support.

The School Review Committee provides teachers with assistance in assessing and monitoring those students who are identified as needing extra support in the classroom. The school also received funding to support 3 students identified with special educational needs. Support for all students requiring individual assistance is given by school support officers working in partnership with teaching staff.

In 2008, 10 students in Junior Stage 1 were successful graduates of the Reading Recovery program and are now being closely monitored by their classroom teachers. Small group learning in the form of Guided Reading and Writing groups continues to meet specific needs.

**Expanding Learning Opportunities**

To enrich the curriculum, the staff at Holy Cross have provided many and varied opportunities for the students to excel. Students participated in a great variety of competitions. Stage 2 & 3 were given the opportunity to compete in the Australasian All Schools Competitions in Mathematics, English, Writing, Spelling, Computer Studies and Science. This year, overall, students received 27 Credits, 9 Distinctions and 2 High Distinctions. For the first time, students at Holy Cross competed in the Australian Maths Trust Competition this year, with 7 of the 9 competitors receiving Credits. There were 48 students who also participated in the Premier’s Reading Challenge which encourages students to read a variety of quality literature.

The school has arranged excursions for students to museums, art galleries, walking tours in the local area, animal farms aquariums, science centres, mines and the mounted Police. Student experiences also included incursions relating to anti-bullying themes, African drumming and Christmas Celebration with Peter Kearney. The knowledge and experiences gained from such activities further enhance and support learning and growing. In addition, ICLT was utilised as a way to represent their findings in a more innovative and interesting way.

In the sporting arena, Holy Cross has been actively involved and well represented in a great number of sports. Apart from the annual swimming, cross-country, and athletics carnivals, there were also the Netball and Soccer Gala days, and the school had teams represent Holy Cross in Rugby League in the Paul McGregor and Rod Wishart Shields. During the year a number of students in Years 3-6 were selected to represent the Wollongong Diocese in sports such as Touch Football, Tennis, Cricket, Soccer, Cross-Country, Rugby League, Hockey, Athletics, Swimming and Softball. Holy Cross had 3 students nominated for Diocesan Sports.
Awards this year and the school was again successful in winning the award for Champion Small School at the Diocesan Athletics Carnival.

Holy Cross conducted its own Public Speaking Competition this year for Stage 3 students with one student from both Year 5 and 6 being selected to represent the school at the Regional Diocesan competition.

Professional Learning
As a community of learners, teachers at Holy Cross School value formal and informal opportunities for professional learning. Special emphasis this year has been in the area of Assessment and Reporting. Staff also attended a variety of professional learning courses including Professional Assault Response Training, ICLT, RE Literacy, Speech and Language and Voice control, anaphylaxis training, Mentoring for beginning teachers and School Review and development.

At a school level there has been substantial staff professional learning on topics such as goal setting for teachers and students, the Learning and Teaching Framework, School Review and Improvement process, analysis of student results from the National Assessment Plan for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and unpacking Maths outcomes for Assessment and Reporting.

Student Achievement
The school uses a variety of assessment strategies at key points in the learning framework. These include teacher observation, projects and presentations. The school also participates in the national Literacy and Numeracy testing program (NAPLAN) 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.

Religious Literacy Assessment
The Wollongong Diocese Religious Literacy Assessment for Year 4 students was completed in August this year. The 28 students who completed the 2-part assessment performed exceptionally well, with 39% scoring in the achieving band and 61% in the extending band.

NAPLAN
The inaugural NAPLAN results indicated that Holy Cross had maintained the high standard made in previous years. 100% of students in Year 3 scored at or above the National Minimum Standard in all aspects of Literacy and Numeracy. Year 5 had similar results in all aspects except Number, where 3% were below the National Minimum Standard. In all areas, Holy Cross was above the Diocesan mean, NSW Catholic mean, NSW all student mean and the National mean – significantly in Reading. Future efforts will focus on the area of Writing.

In Numeracy, the girls were in the top 5 schools in the Diocese regarding the growth rate of students from Year 3 to year 5. and in overall Literacy the Year 5 girls had the best growth in the Diocese and, with the boys, the school had the second best growth rate overall.
# Holy Cross Primary School, Helensburgh
# Student Achievement 2008

## National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy

### Student Achievement in Bands

The National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) was introduced for students in Years 3 and 5 in May this year. NAPLAN replaces the previous State-based Basic Skills Test and the results provide valuable information about student achievements in Literacy and Numeracy. Analysis of the results is used at school level to support the enhancement of literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students. Year 3 results are reported in Bands 1 to 6 with Band 6 representing the highest achievement and Year 5 results are reported in Bands 3 to 8 with Band 8 representing the highest achievement. **Please Note:** Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

### Student Achievement of National Minimum Standard

The lowest Band for each year (Band 1 in Year 3 and Band 3 in Year 5) represents students who are achieving BELOW the National Minimum Standard (NMS) in each aspect of NAPLAN. Students in the second Band for each year (Band 2 in Year 3 and Band 4 in Year 5) represents students who are achieving AT the NMS. Students in all other Bands are achieving ABOVE the NMS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAPLAN 2008: % AT or ABOVE NMS</th>
<th>YEAR 3</th>
<th>YEAR 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spelling</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
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<td>93%</td>
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<td><strong>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
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<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Numeracy</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>94%</td>
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### NAPLAN 2008: % in Bands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAPLAN 2008: % in Bands</th>
<th>YEAR 3</th>
<th>YEAR 5</th>
<th>YEAR 5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% in Bands</td>
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<td>Bands 3 and 4</td>
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<td>79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
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<td>School</td>
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<tr>
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<td>45%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spelling</strong></td>
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<td>School</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<td>16%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>38%</td>
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<td><strong>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</strong></td>
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<td>5%</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Numeracy</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>33%</td>
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</tbody>
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Parent, Student & Staff Satisfaction

Surveys carried out indicate that over 90% of the members of the school community feel a sense of pride in Holy Cross School, are confident that Holy Cross helps students to understand their Catholic faith and encourages them to learn to the best of their ability. There is a strong sense of safety at the school with most students acknowledging that there is someone at the school to help them if required. A high percentage of the community feel that the students are challenged to maximise their learning outcomes, that individual learning needs are catered for and that appropriate information regarding student progress is relayed to the various members of the school community. Two areas referred to in the analyses of the data which the school needs to be mindful of are to continue to expand on the vast array of extra curricula activities already offered and provide appropriate information to parents about student progress.

School Review and Improvement

School Review and Improvement is an ongoing process of self-evaluation measured against a commonly agreed set of criteria. By the end of 2008 all schools have begun the transition to the new School Review and Improvement process.

School Review and Improvement components reviewed in 2008:

- 1.1 Catholic Life and Religious Education: Vision & Mission
- 2.3 Students and their Learning: Reporting Student Achievement
- 3.5 Pedagogy: Assessment
- 6.1 Parents, Partnership, Consultation and Communication: Parent Involvement

School Review and Improvement components to be reviewed in 2009:

- 1.3 Catholic Life and Religious Education: Catholic Life and Culture
- 2.1 Students and their Learning: Educational Potential
- 3.3 Pedagogy: teaching Practices
- 5.2 Resources, Finances and Facilities: Use of Resources and Space
- 5.3 Resources, Finances and Facilities: Environmental Stewardship
- 7.1 Strategic Leadership and Management: Planning for Improvement