St. Mary’s Star of the Sea
Catholic Primary School
Milton

Annual School Report
2008
About This Report

St. Mary’s Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School, Milton 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:

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Milton NSW 2538
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Email: info@stmary’s.woll.catholic.edu.au

Parish Priest: Fr Francis Tran

Principal: Mr Anthony Kent

Date: 12 December 2008
Vision Statement

Help one another as we grow in the love of God.
Our mission is to provide an environment where children, staff and parents are educated in an atmosphere of Catholic traditions while living out Christian Values.

Message from Key School Bodies

Principal’s Message

St Mary’s Star of the Sea Milton in 2008 continued to place strong emphasis on Catholic identity and traditions. The school contributed to the religious, social and academic growth of students through staff commitment to provision of quality learning and teaching programs, student leadership and community connections. The Catholicity of St Mary’s is reflected in the links that are developed between the school and the Parish community. Prominent in this focus is the learning and teaching of Religious Education, the planning and involvement of the school community in liturgical celebrations and the involvement of staff members in personal and professional learning experiences aimed at continuing their spiritual formation and growth. The school community has appreciated the support of our Parish Priest and would like to recognise his involvement in the liturgical life of the school.

Parent Involvement

The P&F Association of the school have been involved in a variety of different fundraising events throughout the year such as the Trivia Night, Bunnings Sausage Sizzles, Mother’s Day Stall, Father’s Day Stall, Canteen, Raffles and Cinema Nights.

Parents have assisted teachers implement our Motor Skills Program for Kindergarten and Year 1. Parents can be observed assisting teachers in the classrooms on a regular basis as well as other extra curricula activities including Sacramental Programs and Retreat Days, Choir performances, Intensive Swimming Program, Parish BBQ, Masses and excursions. Parents also assisted with the running of all carnivals and supported students at a Diocesan level. The P & F Association continues to promote the school and provide financial assistance with particular emphasis on the refurbishments due for completion mid 2009.

Parents and Friends Association, President

Student Leadership

Year Six students provided an excellent standard of leadership. Our School Captains attended a Leadership Day in Sydney as encouragement and motivation for their new roles in leadership. The Year Six students ran our Whole School Assemblies fortnightly. Being strong role models was a focus of leadership and running the Assemblies helped the students with public speaking, delegation, organisation and reverence. Every Monday morning and at each Assembly Year Six students would lead us in the ‘Welcome to Country’, raising of our school flag and the Australian and Indigenous flags, the National Anthem and prayer.

School Captains
School Profile

St Mary’s Star of the Sea School, Milton is a Catholic Primary School, located on the South Coast of NSW. The school was originally founded by the Sisters of St Joseph in 1914 and became part of the Diocese of Wollongong in 1976. It is situated on a beautiful setting on the northern outskirts of Milton overlooking the town to the south, the peaceful rural landscape to the west and north-west and views to the sea in the east. The school is a one stream school serving students from Vincentia to Kioala. Approval for major capital works refurbishments has been gained. The capital works will begin in December 2008/January 2009. Plans include the redevelopment of the school administration area, refurbishments of general learning areas for two Stages and the provision of a Covered Outdoor Learning Area (COLA).

Student Enrolments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>158</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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>94.1%</td>
<td>96.0%</td>
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Staffing Profile

School Leadership

The School Leadership Team had as its focus for 2008 Community Building, Assessment and Numeracy. This new Leadership Team has a clearly defined set of goals for the remaining four years, which should ensure stability and growth in that time. A key component of the School Leadership Team is to reposition St. Mary’s Star of the Sea at the forefront of academic and social justice initiatives.

Specialist Teachers

In 2008 the school had the services of a Specialist Music Teacher. Students attended music weekly, which supported the school’s Creative Arts initiatives. Indonesian continued to be offered to all students.
**Administrative Staff**

The head of the Administrative staff, the Senior School Support officer looks after the financial and administrative duties of the school support staff. The School Support Officers duties include administrative assistance, classroom assistance and Library work. Their roles are important and acknowledged by the teaching staff of the school.

**Teaching Staff Experience**

The staff consists of the Principal, seven full time teachers and three part time teachers. The Principal, Assistant Principal, Religious Education Middle Leader and Middle Leaders work together as the Leadership Team. In addition to primary teaching qualifications, the staff at St Mary’s Star of the Sea holds many Post-graduate degrees and diplomas. Seven teachers have Post-graduate Diplomas in specialist areas. Four teachers have Degrees in Arts, Education and Applied Science, another teacher is currently studying for their Masters of Religious Education, Theology and Leadership. Five teachers are Reading Recovery trained. All teachers hold qualifications in Religious Education. Two teachers have their Certificate in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). All teachers have current First Aid and Anaphylaxis certificates. Three teachers have completed Diversifying Learning Experiences K-12 Course; one teacher completed the Quality Literacy and Numeracy Course. Three School Supports Officers provide extra support for students K– 6 in Numeracy and Literacy. Two teachers are Austswim trained instructors.

**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-NOOSR* 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 95.64%.

The staff retention rate is high at St. Mary’s Star of the Sea with 100% of the teaching staff remaining for the 2008 school year.
Professional Learning

Professional learning opportunities are highly valued and sought by all members of St. Mary’s Star of the Sea school staff. During 2008 school personnel undertook a range of professional learning activities related to improving student outcomes.

These included:
- Mathematics Association NSW Conference,
- Learning Communities Project (Numeracy),
- National Assessment Plan for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) data analysis,
- Religious Literacy Marking,
- Reading Recovery Support Training,
- First Aid Course,
- Anaphylaxis Training,
- Kevin Treston’s ‘Wisdom Schools’, and
- Fr Richard Lennard’s Staff in-service.

School based expenditure on professional learning in 2008 was $2,823. This is in addition to expenditure on professional learning opportunities provided by the Catholic Education Office.

Culture of the Catholic School

At the beginning of the school year the staff of the three Shoalhaven Catholic Schools came together for the Annual Mass and Dinner, which was held at St Mary’s Star of the Sea, Milton Church and School. In Term 1 staff travelled to John Therry Catholic High School Hall, Rosemeadow, for a Spirituality Day to see keynote speaker Father Richard Leonard. This was continued on in Term 4 with four staff meetings in Term 4 set aside for ‘Faith Formation’ based on Wisdom Schools by Kevin Treston. This was finalised by the staff of St Michael’s, Nowra and St Mary’s Star of the Sea, Milton, coming together near the end of Term 4 for a combined Spirituality Day again led by Father Richard Leonard.

St Mary’s Star of the Sea School has continued to develop links with the Parish and the wider local communities. Monthly Parish Masses are attended by school families and followed by BBQ & hospitality. Senior Parishioners remain part of the daily life of the school. Parish and school events have been promoted in both newsletters, particularly World Youth Day (WYD08) events. St Mary’s Star of the Sea plays a key role in the Parish Liturgical celebrations of Lent, Easter and Christmas. Members of the Parish and school staff come together to implement the Sacramental Programs.

Children held many activities to raise money for Caritas, Catholic Mission and the Good Samaritan Rural Outreach Program in Western Australia. Mission, Vocations, National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week, and St Mary’s Feast Day celebrations have remained focal points in the school year. Local community members, guest speakers and Indigenous Dance performers from Ulladulla High School played key roles in these celebrations. Staff organised weekly prayer meetings and attend Staff Spirituality opportunities.
St Mary’s Star of the Sea is recognised by the community as a pastoral and just school. Staff are encouraged and supported in their community involvement. The staff are active in the Church, sport, SES, learn to swim, surf lifesaving, music, St. Vincent de Paul and preschool work on a voluntary basis. This involvement is recognised by the wider community and contributes significantly to the pastoral responsibility we share as a staff.

**Student Welfare**

A range of pastoral care incentives have been continued for students at St Mary’s. Buddy Classes are established between Year Five and Kindergarten and Year Six and Year One. New Kindergarten children come to school to “Get Started” play sessions and Orientation Day. Our school has a Student Welfare Committee for students needing extra support to develop skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to maintain a safe school environment. The Centacare school counselor visits the school once a fortnight and plays a vital role in the pastoral care and well being of students, parents and staff. The focus of our Behaviour Management Policy is to develop and reinforce positive behaviour and provide an environment which reflects the Safe Schools Framework. In compliance with the NSW Reform Act 1990, Corporal Punishment is banned in all Schools within the Diocese of Wollongong.

A Special Education Support teacher and four School Support Officers provide extra support in Numeracy and Literacy for students who currently attract Student with Disability funding and also work in small groups with students who may have learning needs. Catholic schools in the Diocese of Wollongong are committed to providing 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. Access to all policies and guidelines can be obtained by contacting the Catholic Education Office. The Complaints and Grievances Procedures can be found on the Catholic Education Office website. www.ceo.woll.catholic.edu. Then go to the link policies.

**Financial Summary**

The Parish made a financial contribution of $5000 towards the existing building loan. In conjunction with their annual $5000 contribution, the P&F Association contributed financial support to the school in the following ways:

- $5000 to School Enhancement and Debt Servicing Obligation (SEDSO) for Loan Repayment,
- $1850 Air conditioning Canteen,
- $900 Library Resources,
- $500 Stage 3 Excursion,
- $1324 Contribution to enclosing deck (Shortfall of Investing our School’s Money 2007),
- $400 Contribution to Austswim training,
- $249 Digital Photo frame, and
• $290 Expenses incurred with St. Mary’s ‘Dancing with the Stars’ Spring Ball.

SEDSO funds were utilised for the repayment of the school loan, some ongoing maintenance and ongoing costs with the building project, such as council, architect and engineering fees.

The following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for St. Mary’s Star of the Sea School 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
St Mary’s Star of the Sea provides opportunities for students to grow and develop intellectually, physically and spiritually. Renewal of the curriculum and national testing (NAPLAN) has placed emphasis on the development and monitoring of literacy and numeracy skills. The school’s integrated units of work for all Stages has helped ensure the provision of engaging and diversifying, quality learning experiences for all students to achieve specific outcomes. There is a range of curriculum opportunities that reflect an awareness of the individual learning and pastoral needs of the students.

Curriculum and Pedagogy
There are a range of initiatives to support the development of Religious Education, Literacy, Numeracy and other Key Learning Areas through the use of Board of Studies curriculum Documents K-6 and Religious Education Curriculum Documents K-6. Year 3 and 5 sat the NAPLAN testing and Year 4 sat the Religious Literacy Assessment, a project that has been established between the Catholic Education Office, Wollongong and the Australian Catholic University. Staff continue to develop Literacy and Numeracy Plans which include professional learning, intervention and support and parent education.

An important aspect of our Catholic identity is that we provide tuition for the children who are ready to prepare for Sacramental Programs. Sacramental preparation includes Penance, First Eucharist and Confirmation. The programming of Key Learning Areas promotes an integrated approach to learning. Using diversified learning strategies that are based on the theories of Habits of Mind, Bloom’s Taxonomy and Gardiner’s Thinking Hats. Learning and Teaching Programs include analysis of achievement data to inform and improve student outcomes.

Staff members are developing Scope & Sequences with planned Assessments in order to build a continuum of learning for K – 6 across all Key Learning Areas including a process of review. Class teachers and the Leadership Team maintain Review Committee processes that support and monitor the literacy and numeracy needs of students. Leadership Team initiates and monitors Case Management for students with special needs. Implementation of Reading Recovery includes the maintenance of on-going monitoring of ex reading recovery students up to an including Year 4.

Learning Technology remains a priority for the school as students utilise Information Technology as tools to support their learning and enhance their education. St Mary’s Star of the Sea purchased 10 new laptops and 4 new desktop computers. Students have access to two mobile pods of laptops (15 computers), making it possible for all students to use the technology when appropriate for research and learning. While using the technology students are provided with the opportunities to become proficient at using a diverse range of software applications. This enables students to research and express their knowledge in a variety of ways.
Cross Curriculum
During 2008 St Mary’s Star of the Sea has continued implementing a Learning Community Project with the financial and planning assistance of the Catholic Education Office. This project develops a collaborative approach to Numeracy Assessment that is taught in all Stage levels. A whole school plan for the monitoring of reading continues to be implemented and new reading resources to support guided and independent reading programs. Assessment methods for all writing text types have been further developed and these assessments provide valuable feedback used to inform teaching. Students have participated in Public Speaking, Poetry and Choir Performances at school and community levels.

Numeracy remains a high priority at St Mary’s Star of the Sea and the staff has continued to be in-serviced with other schools. Staff members participated in the Mathematics Conference. Students are using Count Me In Too Maths games and assessment tools to enhance their understanding of Maths concepts and support the Mathematics Curriculum K-6.

Indigenous Education was further developed in 2008. St Mary’s Star of the Sea staff reviewed cross curriculum content in accordance with the implementation of Diocesan Policy, celebrated NAIDOC week with members of the local community and representatives of Land Care and the Ulladulla High School Indigenous Dancers – many of whom are ex St Mary’s Star of the Sea students. Land Care volunteer group, along with students planted native plants. All students in the school have spent time weeding, planting trees and vegetables with the Land Care Volunteer Group.

Meeting the Needs of All Students
Our School Library provides the staff and students with educational resources to support individual interest and needs. The standard of literature and other resources available is of high quality. The Teacher Librarian plans collaboratively with teachers to ensure a rich learning environment. Most students completed the Premier’s Reading Challenge this year and the volume of books being borrowed from the Library increased. There has been a substantial increase in the number of literacy resources available in all Stages. Teacher resources have been upgraded to support diversified learning. Indonesian continues to be taught at St Mary’s Star of the Sea to all students from K-6. Lessons focus on language and cultural studies of our nearest neighbour in a positive and meaningful way. Students participated in Clean Up Australia, World Environment Day, National Tree Day and the local Land Care assisted students by planting boundary gardens. Students enjoyed participating in the Active After School Communities (AASC) program. Parents were informed via the P&F about the focus of AASC which is fun, inclusive, safe and high intensity – “Play for Life”. We have gained valuable sporting resources and students have accessed quality programs and equipment.

Expanding Learning Opportunities
St Mary’s Star of the Sea, students participate in a number of formal and informal competitions. Formal competitions included the UNSW Education and Testing competitions in English, Writing and Spelling, Mathematics, Science and Computer Studies. Students received High Distinction, Distinction, Credit and Participation Awards. The local and wider community competitions included: Australian Bush Poetry Society Writing and Recitation Competition, Milton Show Writing Competition and the Milton Scarecrow Competition.
During December children performed on a number of occasions in the local community at the Village Green in Milton, Shoalhaven Anglican School Community Christmas Carols and singing at Sarah Claydon Retirement Village. These were excellent opportunities to promote St Mary’s Star of the Sea School community spirit. All students participated in the local community Arts Fest during the winter months. Children competed in the Australian Bush Poetry recitations. Some children wrote their own poems to recite. The school is very closely linked with the local community through the neighbouring schools, preschools, high schools, local businesses and local council. St Mary’s Star of the Sea offers students the opportunity of a specialist Music Program. All students have curriculum based music lessons and individual students choose to learn a musical instrument in small groups.

Staff and students are working through Gifted Education professional development in order to provide the best learning opportunities for all students. Parents are invited to join the teachers as they further their knowledge and understanding of gifted children.

St Mary’s Star of the Sea offers a wide range of sporting choices. Students participated in the South Coast Swim trials, MacKillop Swimming Championships, MacKillop Cricket Championships, MacKillop Tennis Championships. Cross Country and Wollongong Diocesan Athletics and Gala Days in Soccer, Basketball and Netball. Students participated in St Mary’s Star of the Sea Sports Carnivals and Intensive Swimming Program during Term 4.

Excursions at our school enrich and supplement the curriculum with relevant learning experiences. Children visited; Mogo Zoo, Ulladulla Harbour, Booderee National Park, Nowra Air Museum, Jervis Bay Dolphin Watch, Canberra excursion and the LandCare Nursery.

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 National Assessment Plan for Literacy and Numeracy (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 Religious Literacy Assessment program for Year 4 students was successfully implemented within our school in 2008.

The school cohort consisted of 18 Year 4 students who sat the Religious Literacy Assessment Workbook (Part A) on 1 September and 19 completed the Extended Task (Part B). The Extended Task is based on the Unit One With God’s Creation and was completed during the first half of Term 3.

The performance of each student was described as developing, achieving or extending.
St. Mary’s Religious Literacy results were consistent with the Diocesan percentages. Students showed a high level of performance in their knowledge of the religious tradition. This high level of performance was particularly noticeable in their ability to:

- Identify key symbols, signs and rituals of the Catholic Tradition,
- Identify the Ten Commandments and their guiding principles, and
- Demonstrate an understanding of the Creation Story from Genesis.

The students’ responses showed a need for them to develop their capacity to work with and apply the religious tradition especially in their ability to:

- Recall the events of Holy Week,
- Match scriptures to the liturgical season, and
- Describe some Lenten practices.

Students in Part B displayed improvements in their ability to work with and apply their religious knowledge.

For Part A 11% of students were placed in the developing level, 72% in the achieving level and 17% were in the extending level.

For Part B 0% of students were placed in the developing level, 68% in the achieving level and 32% were in the extending level.

Combining Parts A and B, 6% of students were placed in the developing level, 65% in the achieving level and 29% were in the extending level for Religious Literacy.

**NAPLAN**

In 2008 a new National Assessment Plan for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) for Years 3 and Years 5 was implemented to replace the Basic Skills Test. St Mary’s Year 3 results indicated strengths in Reading, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation. Year 5 results displayed similar trends. The following is a summary of the Literacy and Numeracy analysis for 2008.
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.
Parent, Student & Staff Satisfaction

In a recent survey of parents, students and staff, the following information was obtained relating to their satisfaction with the school. All staff responded to the survey while 53% of parents replied to the 9 survey questions. St. Mary’s Star of the Sea was seen as a safe and supportive environment for students whilst it was acknowledged that the staff had a genuine interest in the student’s welfare.

The parents believed the school provides various opportunities for involvement in school activities and decision making and that communication and reporting are appropriate. Most parents thought the school challenged their child to maximise their learning outcomes. A small number thought that more could be done to meet individual learning needs.

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 school have begun the transition to the new School Review and Improvement process.

School Review and Improvement components reviewed in 2008:
- Assessment
- Parents, parishes and the broader Church
- Linkages to the Wider Community
- Pastoral Care

School Review and Improvement components to be reviewed in 2009:
- Vision and Mission
- Planning, Programming and Evaluation
- Assessment
- Use of resources and space
- Planning for improvement