St Thomas More
Catholic Primary School
Ruse

Annual School Report
2008
About This Report

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, Ruse 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:

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School
PO Box 806B,
Bradbury NSW 2560
Ph: (02) 4625 6561
Fax: (02) 4626 7434
Email: info@stm.woll.catholic.edu.au

Parish Priest: Fr Tony Daly

Principal: Don Spencer
Date: 12 December 2008
Vision Statement

In the spirit of truth and love the vision at St Thomas More Catholic Parish Primary School is to be a welcoming community committed to upholding the dignity of the individual where quality learning and teaching is inspired by the message and life of Jesus.

Message from Key School Bodies

Principal’s Message

It is with pleasure that the St Thomas More Catholic Parish Primary School Ruse presents its Annual School Report for the 2008 School Year.

The 2008 School Year has been one of celebration. Our school community celebrated its thirty year anniversary. In 1978 the St Thomas More Catholic Parish Primary School began its journey, a journey enriched in Catholic tradition and where, in 2008, it continues in its vision to provide a school of quality learning and teaching.

During 2008 the school community was also privileged to support the Wollongong Diocese in hosting international and interstate pilgrims during the World Youth Day celebrations. This experience will be long remembered by staff, children, parents and the wider community for it allowed our school to be part of a celebration where communities world wide witnessed an outpouring of faith, love and friendship.

I personally acknowledge and thank the students, staff, pastor, parents, parish and wider community for the way they have contributed to the effective operation and development of this Catholic learning organisation.

Parent Involvement

Parental involvement is greatly appreciated within St Thomas More. Our school has always had a very committed and hard working Parents & Friends (P&F) Association.

During 2008 many fundraising and school based activities were organised – Kinder Welcome BBQ, Christmas Carols BBQ, McDonalds fundraiser, Feast Day BBQ, 30th Anniversary Celebrations, World Youth Day Hospitality, Annual School Fete, Bunning’s BBQ fundraiser, Mater Dei Chocolate Wheel, working bees, grant application for our water recycling project and established relationships with a number of schools and businesses in our local area.

The Mothers’ Club once again proved to be pro active in organising the Easter Raffle, Mother’s and Father’s Day stalls and numerous hospitality events when required and are a constant support to the P&F.

Funds raised throughout the year will support school projects, therefore improving the quality of learning aids within our school.

The 2008 P&F Executive wishes to thank everyone involved in assisting them throughout the past year.
For the P&F to be successful, we need to have on-going support of the parents and caregivers of our students. It is our aim to all work together to achieve the outcomes needed to support our children and teaching staff, by assisting to provide valuable resources required at St Thomas More.

*Parents & Friends Association, President*

**Student Leadership**

2008 was an eventful but joyful year for everyone here at St Thomas More. All Year 6 students had the opportunity to be a School Leader. All Year 6 students received Student Leader badges. Each year we have a program called Peer Support. This year all of our Year 6 students had the responsibility of becoming Peer Support Leaders. The topic this year was ‘Promoting Harmony’.

The school captains participated in the A.N.Z.A.C day ceremony. We also had the opportunity to be involved in World Youth Day. World Youth Day was a very important celebration for Catholics. We got to help celebrate it by carrying the flags as John Therry students were handing the cross over to St Patrick’s.

This year our school celebrated its 30th birthday. The school captains had the opportunity to meet two of the students that were here 30 years ago.

All the Captains had the opportunity to lead prayer and hand out awards at assembly. During assembly each grade showcases what they have been learning about during the term to the rest of the school. In all 2008 was a very successful year at St Thomas More and we would like to wish the students and teachers all the best for the future.

*School Captains*

**School Profile**

St Thomas More Catholic Parish Primary School is a two stream Kindergarten to Year 6 school, which endeavours to cater for the spiritual, moral, intellectual, social, emotional and physical education of students who reside within and outside the boundary of St Thomas More Parish, Ruse.

The school opened in 1978 with a total enrolment of one hundred and sixty nine students and ten staff members. Since its inception the school has grown and in 2008 has an enrolment of three hundred and sixty three children and a staff of twenty nine. Over the years St Thomas More has benefited from a tradition enriched by the Sisters of the Good Samaritan and also the Marist Brothers inspired by both Principals and staff who worked at the school. The land on which the school is built was kindly donated to the Wollongong Diocese by the Good Samaritan Sisters.

As a Parish School, it is intended that the spiritual growth and welfare of the students be carefully integrated within a needs-based education, which will be the shared responsibility of the Parish Priest, Principal, Staff and Parents under the supportive 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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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>157</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>362</td>
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</table>

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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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90.5%</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
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Staffing Profile

There are a total of 22 teachers at St Thomas More Catholic Parish Primary School. During 2008 St Thomas More teaching staff consisted of seventeen full time teachers and five part-time teachers.

School Leadership
The School Leadership Team comprises six members: Principal, Assistant Principal, Religious Education Co-ordinator and three Middle Leader 2 positions.

Specialist Teachers
During 2008 St Thomas More Catholic Parish Primary School had only one specialist teacher who was the Teacher Librarian.

Administrative Staff
During 2008 St Thomas More Catholic Parish Primary School had eleven school support staff. Members of the support staff included a Senior School Support Officer, nine School Support Officers and a Canteen Supervisor. Of the School Support Officers two worked in office administration, one in library administration and seven assisted teachers with the learning and teaching of children within the classroom setting.

Teaching Staff Experience
The teaching staff had a range of years teaching experience:

- One teacher was a beginning teacher;
- One teacher was in their second year of teaching;
- One teacher was in their third year of teaching;
• Seven teachers, 5-10 years;
• Two teachers, 11-15 years;
• One teacher, 16 – 20 years; and,
• Nine teachers had 20 years or more experience.
Of the twenty two teaching staff at St Thomas More during 2008, nine staff have completed post graduate studies to Masters level.

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

Staff Attendance
The average daily staff attendance rate for 2008 was 96.94%.
The staff retention rate is high at St Thomas More Catholic Parish Primary School with 95% of the teaching staff remaining for the 2009 School Year.

Professional Learning
Professional learning opportunities are highly valued and sought by all members of St Thomas More Catholic Parish Primary school staff. During 2008 school personnel undertook a range of professional learning activities related to improving student outcomes.
These included:
• Rock and Water training;
• Attending the Stewardship Institute;
• Special Education Conference;
• School Review and Improvement (SRI);
• Quality Learning and Teaching Framework;
• Developing an understanding of and improving classroom practices in components of the Literacy Block with emphasis on spelling and grammar;
• Literacy and Numeracy;
• Enriching spirituality of staff;
School based expenditure on professional learning in 2008 was $12,612. This is in addition to expenditure on professional learning opportunities provided by the Catholic Education Office (CEO).

**Culture of the Catholic School**

St Thomas More Catholic Parish Primary School seeks to promote its own Catholic Identity and the traditions of the Catholic Church. We do this through ensuring that there is a visibility throughout the school of symbols of the Catholic Faith and most importantly, through the provision of quality prayer experiences and liturgical celebrations for all within the community. The School continues to develop a strong relationship with the Parish community. At the beginning of the school year the school welcomed Father Tony Daly to the community. Father Daly visits each class at least once a term and is a regular visitor to functions. In addition he administers the Sacrament of Penance each term and also willingly celebrates important feasts at the school. Each term, students in all grades travelled by bus to the Parish Church to celebrate Mass with the Parish community; parents and grandparents are also invited to these celebrations.

The concept of ‘Stewardship – a way of life’ is continuing to be entrenched into the St Thomas More community. The children participated in ‘Stewardship Week’ whereby morning prayers and Religious Education lessons focused on the concept of Stewardship. The school also participated in the St Thomas More Parish ‘Time and Talent’ festival. Stewardship awards, which acknowledge students for their use of their time, talents and treasures, were introduced and have been well received.

The Catholic children in the school are active participants in the Parish Sacramental Program. In 2008 each of the Sacramental Programs was supported by the religious lessons in the classrooms. The Religious Education Co-ordinator liaised with the Parish Sacramental Team to ensure that Parish /School communication was maintained. The Sacrament of Confirmation was administered in Term 3. The children of the Parish received the Sacrament of the Eucharist in Term 2 and in Term 4 the Sacrament of Penance was received.

A major focus and highlight for 2008 was World Youth Day. The St Thomas More Catholic Parish Primary School community was privileged to host international and interstate pilgrims during the week long celebration. The children also welcomed the Cross and Icon to the community and participated in the celebration with the school’s neighbours at St Patrick’s College.

Another very significant development in 2008 was the refurbishment of an older demountable classroom into a permanent prayer space. This room now allows children, staff and parents a place to pray, reflect and receive the Sacraments in a more reverent and prayerful setting.
In 2008 the students were involved in Social Justice Initiatives including: fundraising activities for St Vincent de Paul, Mission Week, Project Compassion and Ethiopia. Over $1500 was donated to these worthy causes.

Various special celebrations and commemoration days were celebrated throughout the year. These included St Patrick’s Day, ANZAC Day, the feast of the Assumption, the Annual Christmas Pageant and the St Thomas More feast day celebration. Easter and Holy week celebrations were a highlight with the opportunity for students, parents and staff to participate in the Stations of the Cross at Maryfields.

The staff participated in an overnight retreat/ spirituality day. The retreat was held at Hartzer Park Bowral and was facilitated by representatives from Centacare who led the staff through the Myers Briggs program. The input, reflection, discussion and social interaction were thoroughly enjoyed by all staff who attended.

**Student Welfare**

Catholic Schools are based on the dignity of the whole person and provide witness to Gospel Values as a means to living out daily life. These values are captured in the Diocesan and School’s Pastoral Care Policy. St Thomas More Catholic Parish Primary School continues to provide valuable support to all members of the school community. We strive to promote positive relationships amongst all members of the community, especially the students. Throughout the year children are encouraged to strive to do the best they can. Their achievements are recognised through a series of awards such as weekly individual awards, the Student of the Week Award and the opportunity to have morning tea with the Principal in recognition of exemplary behaviour.

The Kindergarten Social Skills program, which focuses on the teaching of social skills and competencies and gives practical experiences aimed at setting the children up for successful learning for the rest of their schooling was again implemented and is now an integral program in the school.

The children once again participated in the Peer Support Program. The Year 6 children, facilitated the weekly sessions which, during Term 3, 2008, focused on the program ‘Promoting Harmony’.

Centacare continues to provide family counselling support on a weekly basis. The program was interrupted during the year due to the resignation of the school counsellor assigned to the school. Two Centacare staff assisted with the implementation of the ‘Rock and Water’ program for Year 3 children.

St Thomas More ‘Kid’s Club’ continues to be well attended. The aim of this program is to create a fair, co-operative and fun lunch time setting where all children are treated with respect and dignity. A social skills program introduced in 2007 for those children who are on the autistic spectrum and which runs during lunch, continues to be implemented by the very competent School Support Officers.

The revised St Thomas More Behaviour Management Policy was implemented in February 2008. A revised Pastoral Care Policy and Anti Bullying policy have been developed and are in draft form awaiting ratification and implementation. St Thomas More Catholic Parish Primary
School has also been asked to pilot the Diocesan School Wide Positive Behaviour for Learning process. This pilot program will continue during the 2009 School Year.

In compliance with the NSW Reform Act 1990, corporal punishment is banned in ALL schools within the Diocese of Wollongong.

St Thomas More Catholic Parish 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 Complaints and Grievances Procedures can be found on the Catholic Education Office website: www.ceowoll.catholic.edu.au then go to the link ‘Policies’.

Access to all polices and guidelines can be obtained by contacting the school office.

Financial Summary

Financial administration and management procedures at St Thomas More Catholic Parish Primary School are well documented, communicated and working well in practice. Budgets and financial records are set and managed by the School Leadership Team and Senior School Support Officer. Effective liaison with the Administrative Services Team at the Catholic Education Office is maintained.

During 2008 normal school running costs were incurred. In addition, the St Thomas More Catholic Parish Primary School underwent its annual building maintenance program which is funded by the parish School Enhancement and Debt Servicing Obligation (SEDSO) fund. The cost of this program was $16,935. The parish SEDSO fund also funded other major works such as upgrading storm water drainage ($12,800), refurbishment of demountable classroom ($5,926), upgrading of electrical circuit breakers ($9,680) and the resurfacing of areas of the car park and access roads ($14,107).

The Campbelltown Catholic Club was very generous in its donation to the school in 2008. The donation of $20,000 allowed for the extension of the covered walkways throughout the school. The school is very grateful for the support of the Club.

During 2008 the school received funds through the Federal Government’s ‘Investing in Our Schools Program’. Funds to the sum of $29,000 were used to purchase computer software and hardware and Literacy and Numeracy resources. The school was also successful in obtaining a grant of $20,000 to install water tanks where rainwater will be harvested to assist with the watering of gardens and playing areas. St Thomas More Catholic Parish Primary School would like to thank and acknowledge the support of the Australian Federal Government.

The Parents & Friends Association and Mothers’ Club were also generous with their support throughout 2008. The funds provided by these two school community groups were used to purchase computers, media trolleys, reading materials, sporting ribbons and also the subsidising of the children’s gymnastics program.

The balance carried forward represents outstanding accounts and orders for the beginning of the 2009 School Year. Significant accounts being for the completion of the installation of the
rainwater tanks, purchasing of new chairs for the Small Hall and the purchase of laptop computers.

The following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for St Thomas More Catholic Parish Primary 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
At St Thomas More Catholic Parish Primary School, all Board of Studies requirements are being met as the school strives to implement a contemporary curriculum to meet the needs of all students. In addition to the Key Learning Areas (KLAs) prescribed by the Board of Studies, the students have been provided with courses of study in Religious Education in accordance with Diocesan Policy. The St Thomas More School Renewal Plan 2006 – 2009, which incorporates the school statement of ‘Quality Learning and Teaching’ and also the implementation of the Diocesan School Review and Improvement process provided a focus for initiatives in learning and teaching in 2008.

Curriculum and Pedagogy
During 2008 St Thomas More Catholic Parish Primary School embarked on the second year of its Learning Communities Project, ‘Back to Basics’. By embracing the Back to Basics - Literacy Community Project, the St. Thomas More School community addressed the need for improved Literacy outcomes. Each stage engaged in professional learning and dialogue to develop the spelling and grammar components of the Literacy Block. A Professional Development Day and a number of stage meetings were provided for the teachers to discuss and share changes and development of classroom practices. An opportunity for peer observations took place for staff to see Literacy Block episodes in action and to further dialogue and share ideas. Focus on this professional learning opportunity was the structure of Literacy tasks in Stage 1 and the critical literacy episode of the Literacy Block in Stage 2.

The need to improve Numeracy standards was also addressed. Parents were invited to attend two numeracy information sessions during the year where both input from staff and practical participation in children’s Mathematics lessons were presented.

At St Thoms More we appreciate the importance of Information Communication Learning Technologies (ICLT) as an effective tool for learning and teaching. Children have access to desktop computers either in their own classrooms (Kinder, Yrs 1,2 and 3) or when visiting the Discovery Centre. All children and staff have access to laptop technology and the multi media trolleys in each stage allows for the use of digital cameras, video cameras and data projectors which enhance the presentation and delivery of class work.

Assessment is an integral component of learning and teaching. It occurs as a natural part of the learning cycle, before, during and after teaching. A 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 communicated to parents using the Federal Government mandated A-E reporting system and three way Parent\Teacher\Student conferences. The children in Year 3 and Year 5 completed the National Assessment Plan for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests. Children in Year 4, 5 and 6 were also given the opportunity to participate in the University of New South Wales, Mathematics, English, Computer and Science Tests. The children in Year 4 also participated in the Wollongong Diocese Religious Literacy Assessment.
Cross Curriculum
During 2008 Literacy development continued to be a focus. The Literacy Block is well entrenched into the teaching day in all classes. Reading resources for the library levelled reading texts and texts to support critical literacy were purchased to assist in the learning and teaching of Literacy. Numeracy resources were also purchased to assist with the teaching of the Mathematics Key Learning Area.

During Catholic Schools Week the St Thomas More school community celebrated with a numeracy fun day. Parents had the opportunity to join in activities with their children and also be given valuable input by the Numeracy co-ordinator as to how numeracy is taught in classes. The purpose of Catholic Schools Week is to increase public awareness of the strengths and distinctiveness of Catholic Schools and to act as a focus for community celebrations about the good things that occur every day in Catholic schools.

The school library has adopted the name ‘The Discovery Centre’ which staff members believe is more reflective title for this valuable resource. Children and class teachers worked in collaboration with the school librarian in research and inquiry topics which utilised the abundant technology and library resources available.

Book Week celebrations were again a highlight for children, staff, parents and preschoolers. The Book Character Parade involved all children, including preschoolers, and each grade presentation was well received by the many parents and family members who attended.

Several classes took the opportunity to enhance learning through excursions and all classes attended visiting performances and workshops. During Term 4 all children participated in a Gymnastics Skills program. The Year 5 children enjoyed a three day camp to Teen Ranch and the Year 6 children enjoyed a three day excursion to Canberra and the snowfields.

During Term 4 the Year 5 students once again participated in a program called ‘Transition Through Technology’. The students travelled by bus to John Therry Catholic High School (JTCHS) every Tuesday to engage in a number of learning and teaching experiences in Woodwork, Science, Music, Visual Arts, Food and Textiles and Dance. The students also interacted with the students from JTCHS and Year 5 from Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic School, Rosemeadow. At the end of the program the students and teachers invited parents to a ‘Showcase of the Workshops’. Students were able to demonstrate their new skills and products.

Indigenous perspectives are included within at least one unit of work in Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE) with greater focus undertaken in this area in Years 3 and 6. In preparation of National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week children focused on activities relating to raising awareness of indigenous culture and issues.

St Thomas More Catholic Parish Primary School has continued to develop links with St Patrick’s College. During 2008 students from the College were invited to and assisted at the school’s Athletics Carnival. The children in Year 6 and Year 4 engaged in a series of Physical Education lessons facilitated by the St Patrick’s Year 9 Sports Science students and Year 5 students participated in a Creative Arts Expo at the College.

The children from Kindergarten to Year 6 had the opportunity to participate in The Premiers Reading Challenge. This reading initiative is designed to encourage and increase a love of literature.
Meeting the Needs of All Students

In addressing the individual needs of students, a variety of individual support structures are provided. These include peer reading, school assistant intervention and Reading Recovery.

The Reading Recovery Program continued to offer an intensive reading program to the students in Year 1, where 17 students accessed the program. This year all 17 students were successfully discontinued from Reading Recovery. The Reading Recovery teacher was also able to provide Literacy support to the Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 classes.

Students with specific learning needs continue to be supported at St Thomas More through the School Review Committee. The committee comprised a selection of staff under the guidance of the Review Committee Manager. Staff members meet regularly to review students who are identified with specific needs and strategies are put in place to assist both the child and teacher with their learning and teaching.

In addition, the school has a number of students who receive additional funding for specific assistance. Transition meetings are held each term with the parents of these students and class teachers to evaluate and plan achievable short-term learning goals. Individual Education Plans for each of these students were developed.

The Diocesan Early Literacy Assessment Program (ELA) was implemented in Years K and 1 with information obtained through this assessment being used to inform teaching and to assist in the identification of those children needing learning support.

The St Thomas More Learning Centre had another highly successful year. The centre continues to cater for those children with identified intellectual disability.

All classes participated in the fun Mathematics activities during National Literacy and Numeracy Week specifically ‘Reach for the Stars’. During 2008 inquiry groups were initiated to support several children identified in each stage who needed to be further challenged in their learning.

Expanding Learning Opportunities

Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) needs are well catered for through the weekly PE and Sport lessons. A Gymnastics Skills Program was implemented during Term 4 for all classes. All children participated in the School Cross Country and Athletics Carnivals. Children from Years 3 to 6 and selected Year 2 and Year 1 children participated in the Annual Swimming Carnival. Staff also prepared children for participation in a number of Diocesan and local sporting events and carnivals including cross country, cricket, athletics, basketball, netball, swimming, soccer, oz tag, touch football and rugby league. The school was represented by the Senior Soccer Team at the Annual Tiger Shield Soccer Tournament. A number of students represented St Thomas More at Diocesan and MacKillop trials with seven children being selected in teams.

Year 5 and Year 6 children had the opportunity to trial for and participate in the Diocesan Public Speaking Competition.

The school choir continues to be well supported by the children and they were keen participants in Parish Masses, the school Christmas celebrations and the welcoming of the
Cross and Icon during World Youth Day celebrations. The choir also had the opportunity to perform at the Annual Fete.

Children also had the opportunity to learn Keyboard through the Music Institute Program and also children in Years 5 and 6 were given the opportunity to learn guitar due to the generous giving of time by a talented staff member.

The ‘Active Afternoon Program’ has again proved a very popular activity among the children from St Thomas More. On average, sixty children per week participate in the program. The program is cost free and it allows the children the opportunity to participate in fun, healthy, organised activities which promote a healthy lifestyle. The program was offered two afternoons per week for seven weeks during each school term.

This year the children in Years 5 and 6 were given the opportunity to enter art works in ‘The Christmas Story Art Competition and Exhibition 2008’ run by the Archdiocese of Sydney. Two students from the school had their works chosen for the exhibition and were awarded certificates for their achievements.

Professional Learning
The school leadership team has undertaken a commitment to sustained, collaborative and meaningful professional learning. Throughout the 2008 School Year the focus has been on developing and improving Literacy in the school. A staff development day and many staff meetings focused on the spelling and grammar components of the Literacy Block. Professional learning opportunities were also provided for staff to begin the Diocesan process of School Review and Improvement. This process is in its initial stage of implementation and will be further developed in 2009. A school development in 2008 was the first cycle of peer observation. This form of professional learning is seen by staff as a very worthwhile means of learning as peers have much to offer in both experience and expertise. The staff of St Thomas More also benefits from the fact that a staff member is a member of the Diocesan Literacy and Numeracy Reference group which allows for valuable feedback and input for staff.

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 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 the school in 2008.

The school cohort consisted of 40 Year 4 students who sat the Religious Literacy Assessment Workbook (Part A) on 1 September and 42 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.

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;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the Creation Story from Genesis; and,
- Identify key symbols used in liturgical celebrations.

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 Easter;
- Match scriptures to the liturgical season; and,
- Identify parts of the Liturgy of the Word.

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

For Part A 27.5% of students were placed in the developing level, 62.5% in the achieving level and 10% were in the extending level.

For Part B 16.7% of students were placed in the developing level, 69% in the achieving level and 14.3% were in the extending level.

Combining Parts A and B, 30% of students were placed in the developing level, 57.5% in the achieving level and 12.5% were in the extending level for Religious Literacy.

**NAPLAN**

In May 2008 the children in Years 3 and Years 5 sat the NAPLAN tests. There were 50 Year 3 and Year 5 students who sat these tests. Year 3 is reported in Bands 1-6 and Year 5 in Bands 3-8.

**Year 3**

In Literacy 12% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 14% in Band 6. The most significant growth was in Writing with a 5.5 point growth. There was an overall growth of 3.7 points in Literacy.

In Numeracy 8% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 12% in Band 6. There has been an overall growth of 8.6 points in Numeracy since 2006.

**Year 5**

In Literacy 8% of students were in Bands 3 and 4, with 2% in Band 8. The most significant growth was in Reading with a 1.1 point growth. There was an overall growth of 1.8 points in Literacy.

In Numeracy 16% of students were in Bands 3 and 4, with 2% of students in Band 8. There has been an overall growth of 14.1 points in Numeracy since 2006.
St Thomas More Primary School  
Ruse  
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.

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<tr>
<th>NAPLAN 2008: % in Bands</th>
<th>YEAR 3</th>
<th>YEAR 5</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bands 1 and 2</td>
<td>Bands 3 and 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>School 18% 36% 46% 8% 72% 20%</td>
<td>National 18% 41% 40% 22% 50% 27%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>School 0% 48% 52% 14% 62% 24%</td>
<td>National 10% 45% 45% 18% 54% 26%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>School 12% 58% 30% 14% 58% 28%</td>
<td>National 16% 45% 38% 20% 53% 26%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</td>
<td>School 16% 50% 34% 18% 62% 20%</td>
<td>National 18% 40% 40% 18% 47% 33%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>School 8% 60% 32% 16% 76% 8%</td>
<td>National 14% 51% 33% 23% 55% 21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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>Reading</td>
<td>School 92% 98%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National 94% 92%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>School 100% 98%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National 97% 94%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>School 98% 96%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National 94% 93%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</td>
<td>School 92% 94%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National 93% 93%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>School 98% 98%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National 97% 94%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parent, Student & Staff Satisfaction

Parents, staff and students were given the opportunity by means of a survey, to provide the school with feedback on its performance in a number of key areas. The information gathered from all those who responded was overwhelmingly positive in each of the surveyed areas.

Results indicated that staff, parents and students were unanimous in recognising that Catholic traditions are firmly embedded in the culture of St Thomas More. In addition, the respondents commented positively on the safe and supportive environment of the school where the staff cares deeply for their students and where the welfare of each child is a priority. Students indicated that they are proud of their school and that they have a sound understanding of their rights and responsibilities as members of the school community. St Thomas More is perceived by all as offering students with many opportunities to participate in a wide variety of co-curricula activities. An effective network of school communication that provides details of upcoming events and activities supports this.

Although overwhelming positive, the school recognises the need to further develop opportunities which will develop among staff an increased awareness of the individual learning needs of students, thus further enhancing and maximising each child’s learning potential.

This area has been included as one of the identified priorities for school improvement in 2009.

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:

- Catholic Life and Culture
- Pastoral Care
- Teaching Practices
- ICT Resources

School Review and Improvement components to be reviewed in 2009:

- Religious Education
- Integration of Information and Communication Technology
- Teaching Practices
- School Climate, learning Environment and Relationships
- Financial management