Stella Maris
Catholic Primary School
Shellharbour

Annual School Report
2008
About This Report

Stella Maris Catholic Primary School, Shellharbour is registered by the Board of Studies (NSW) and managed by the Catholic Education Office (CEO), Diocese of 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:

Stella Maris Catholic Primary School
PO Box 4126,
Shellharbour NSW 2529
Ph: (02) 4296 4606
Fax: (02) 4295 1885
Email: info@stella.woll.catholic.edu.au

Parish Priest: Fr Bryan Jones

Principal: Sr Colleen Mills RSC
Date: 12 December 2008
Vision Statement

“Reverence the Story of all People”

Message from Key School Bodies

Principal’s Message
Throughout 2008 Stella Maris Catholic School has continued to offer the children enrolled a quality Catholic education which embraces our Mission and Vision Statement with Core Values.

The faith formation and spiritual development of our children has been a priority. 47 children from Year 3 received the Sacrament of Penance and First Holy Communion. 36 Year 6 received the Sacrament of Confirmation. Children attend weekly Mass and whole school liturgies are fortnightly. 2008 has been a Jubilee year. Stella Maris Catholic School celebrated 50 years of Catholic Education in the Shellharbour City Parish under the care and leadership of the Sisters of Charity.

Many celebrations and activities marked the significance of the school’s journey 1958-2008.

Positive relationships and collaboration with parents is of paramount importance in building a welcoming, hospitable school community.

Parent Involvement
Parent involvement at Stella Maris Catholic School is warmly welcomed, highly valued and deeply appreciated.

Throughout the year parents have assisted teachers and children in classroom activities, sporting and cultural events, excursions and jubilee events, canteen and school discos.

At the beginning of the year a Welcome BBQ was hosted to welcome new families. A very successful Fashion Parade, Mothers and Fathers’ Day stalls, the Big Birthday Celebration, Chocolate and Pie Drives were some events organised.

A total of $42,000 has been donated to the school for the purchase of computers, a computer mobile trolley, library and sporting resources.

The Parents and Friends Executive acting on behalf of the parent body have successfully sustained a prosperous and harmonious partnership between families and staff fostering a strong community spirit.

Parents and Friends Association, President

Student Leadership
The Student Council have met regularly throughout the year and have organised various fundraising activities.
In Term 1 they organised a Giant Easter Raffle and in Term 2 they raised money to support the Burma Earthquake Appeal. In Term 4 they organised a Crazy Hat Parade which was enjoyed by all who attended. The money they raised from the hat parade has been donated to the St Vincent de Paul Society to assist them with their Christmas Appeal. Other funds have been used to purchase sporting equipment and other school resources.

School Captains

School Profile

Stella Maris Catholic School opened in May 1958, with two Sisters of Charity and 46 pupils. The school is now a co-educational two stream primary school with 317 students, administered by the Wollongong Catholic Education Office and is under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Wollongong, Peter Ingham.

As part of the All Saints Parish, Stella Maris is a community centred on the person of Christ. We endeavour to build a Christian Community where human knowledge, enlightened and enlivened by faith is shared by the Clergy, teachers, students and parents in the spirit of love and freedom.

Student Enrolments

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>317</td>
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The Enrolment Policy and Procedures can be found on the Catholic Education Website: www.ceowoll.catholic.edu.au then link to Policies.

Student Attendance for 2008

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>89.8%</td>
<td>91.0%</td>
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Staffing Profile

There are a total of 19 teachers at Stella Maris Catholic School.

School Leadership

Our leadership team consists of the Principal, Assistant Principal, Religious Education Middle Leader and three Middle Leaders.

Specialist Teachers

At Stella Maris Catholic School we have the following specialist teachers: one Physical Education teacher; one Reading Recovery teacher, two Executive Release teachers and one teacher/librarian.
Administrative Staff
Our Administrative Staff consists of one Senior School Support Officer and five School Support Officers.

Teaching Staff Experience
Teaching staff at Stella Maris Catholic School currently have the following years of experience:
Twelve teachers have more than 20 years experience. Two teachers with 15 years or more and five teachers with between 3-10 years experience.
Eleven teachers have a Bachelor of Teaching and eight have a Diploma of Teaching.

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 94.06%.
The staff retention rate is high at Stella Maris Catholic School with 89% of the teaching staff remaining for the 2009 school year.

Professional Learning
Professional learning opportunities are highly valued and sought by all members of Stella Maris Catholic School staff.
During 2008 school personnel undertook a range of professional learning activities related to improving student outcomes.
These included:
- School Review & Improvement,
- Restorative Justice,
- Special Education Forum,
- Numeracy, and
- Strategies for improving writing & Spelling.

School based expenditure on professional learning in 2008 was $6700. This is in addition to expenditure on professional learning opportunities provided by the Catholic Education Office.
Culture of the Catholic School

At Stella Maris Catholic School, staff and students aim to follow our school’s Vision statement as we “Reverence the Story of all People”. This year we have celebrated the provision of 50 years of Catholic education under the leadership of the Sisters of Charity in Shellharbour. The charism of Mary Aikenhead, the founder of the Sisters of Charity, continues to inform our ministry today. To mark our Jubilee Year, students participated in several events including the Foundation Day Liturgy, a Golden Jubilee Mass celebrated by Bishop Peter Ingham and a Mary Aikenhead themed Liturgy.

Stella Maris Catholic School forms an integral part of All Saints Parish and we work in partnership with our Parish Priests to provide students with opportunities for worship, reception of Sacraments and Parish involvement. The school continues to support the Parish based Reconciliation and First Communion Partner Programs. 36 Year 6 students participated in a Confirmation Program that was prepared and facilitated by class teachers. Children from Stella Maris and Nazareth schools came together for thanksgiving Masses following the Sacraments of First Holy Communion and Confirmation. Additionally, Stella Maris joined with Nazareth and Corpus Christi Secondary School for our Parish Feast Day Masses on All Saints Day. To celebrate World Youth Day we hosted the Cross and Icon Liturgy. This was a collaboration between local Catholic schools, the wider community and parishioners.

The school continues to celebrate its Catholic identity through Prayer and Liturgy. Grade liturgies are held fortnightly to support the Religious Education curriculum. Many liturgies have been presented this year. These have included: ANZAC Day, Easter, Lent, Missions, Advent and Christmas. Our school Feast Day, the Assumption, was celebrated reverently with song, dance and mime. Classes attended Mass at Sacred Heart Church on this day. Reflective Prayer is an integral part of our day, during which children have the opportunity to pray using different formats and experiences. During the month of October all classes spent some time praying the Rosary.

Religion is taught daily from the Diocesan Religious Education syllabus teaching scripture, history and tradition of our Catholic faith. 37 students in Year 4 undertook the Diocesan Religious Literacy Assessment. The distribution of performance levels were as follows: 8.1% - developing, 51.4% - achieving, 40.5% - extending.

Throughout the year the school has been involved in many social justice programs. The Spellathon, our major fundraiser, raised $2500 to aid in translating the Lectionary for Indigenous children. Children continue to give generously to the class Mission boxes. Organisations supported include Catholic Mission, Caritas and the St Vincent de Paul Society.
Student Welfare

Our school vision statement, ‘Reverence the Story of all People’ is central in ensuring that all members of the school community work and play in a safe and supportive environment.

The Pastoral Care Committee supports teachers with the identification of pastoral, behavioural and emotional needs of children in their care. Restorative Justice principles underpin the Student Behaviour Management and Support Policy which provides clear procedures for dealing with behavioural issues including bullying and harassment. All staff have received training in Restorative Justice, Anaphylaxis management and First Aid.

Children’s achievements are acknowledged through a weekly Award system. A Safe Schools Policy developed in conjunction with the National Safe Schools Framework continues to be implemented with school evacuation and lockdown procedures practised each Term.

A Centacare Counsellor provides counselling and supports the running of social skills programs: ‘Hit the Ground Running’ (Year 6), ‘Pals’ (Kindergarten), ‘Tools for Everyday Peacemakers’ (Year 4). Kindergarten and Year 6 children participate in ‘Buddies’. The ‘Seasons for Growth’ Program is available for children with specific pastoral needs. Student leadership is encouraged through the Year 6 Young Leaders’ Day and the student leadership team. Parents or guardians are provided with opportunities to be informed and discuss their child’s education through Kindergarten orientation days, information nights and parent/teacher interviews.

Parents are advised that Complaints and Grievances Procedures can be found on the Catholic Education Office website: www.ceo.woll.catholic.edu.au then link to policies. In compliance with the NSW Reform Act 1990, Corporal Punishment is banned in ALL Schools within the Diocese of Wollongong. Access to all policies and guidelines can be obtained by contacting the school office.
Financial Summary

During the year several major projects have been completed at Stella Maris Catholic School. These have included the installation of water tanks thanks to a Government Grant, gas heaters to Years 1 and 2 rooms and a softfall safety surface beneath playground equipment. In addition, we have replaced all students’ desks and chairs in Years 3 to 6.

The Parents & Friends have had another successful year holding a number of fundraising activities. Funds raised have enabled the purchase of computers, a computer trolley and resources for sport and library use.

The following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for Stella Maris Catholic 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
Learning and Teaching at Stella Maris Catholic School reflects our Core Values and continues to provide learning experiences of the highest quality. All Key Learning Areas mandated by the NSW Board of Studies are taught with priority given to Religious Education through the Diocese of Wollongong Religious Education Curriculum. In 2008 our identified focus areas have been Religious Education, Mathematics, Behaviour Management (Restorative Justice Practices) and the integration of Learning Technology.

Curriculum and Pedagogy
At Stella Maris Catholic School the staff have continued to work with Education Officers from the Catholic Education Office (CEO) to reflect upon our school’s Core Values and explore how we can further meet the needs of all children in providing learning experiences of the highest quality.

Assessment is an integral part of the daily learning and teaching experience involving both formal and informal practices. Data from the Schedule for Early Numeracy Assessment (SENA) and the Early Literacy Assessment (ELA) informs learning and teaching in Early Stage 1 and Stage 1. Children in Years 3 and 5 completed the National Assessment Plan for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) assessment in Numeracy and Literacy. The resulting data was analysed and will be used to support the learning needs of individual children and inform whole school planning. The Year 4 children participated in the Wollongong Diocese Religious Literacy Assessment, which focused on the theme of Creation.

Information and Communication Learning Technology (ICLT) is integral to the learning process. Teachers continue to use the Diocesan Network to enhance learning and develop a deep understanding. The integration of learning technology into a contemporary curriculum has remained a priority. In 2008 fifteen new laptops and ten new desktop computers have been purchased. A new mobile trolley has increased the flexible use of technology creating a rich environment for learning.

Scope and Sequences for learning have been revised and updated for each Key Learning Areas and teachers continue to plan collaboratively utilising the Diocesan Learning and Teaching Framework (DLTF) to develop a comprehensive range of strategies that enrich learning and cater for all learning styles.

Cross Curriculum
Indigenous Education support in 2008 continued to focus on the integration of Indigenous perspectives across all Key Learning Area. In continuing our commitment in recognising the traditional owners of our land, our school assembly and gatherings continue to begin with the traditional ‘Welcome to Country’.

Literacy & Numeracy Week was celebrated with the children engaging in a variety of learning activities inspired by the 2008 Book Week short listed books. Children dressed as their favourite book characters from various decades and participated in a parade. A variety of whole school activities were planned and enjoyed by all the children and their parents. All classes participated in ‘Reach for the Stars’ providing a fun aspect to the collection of mathematical data which was included in an Australia wide data analysis.

Year 6 attended the Southern Illawarra Catholic Schools (SICS) Annual Young Leaders’ Day held at St Paul’s Albion Park. Guest speaker Arron Wood (2004 Young Environmentalist of
the Year) explored the qualities of leadership and the responsibility that we all share in being
good stewards of our planet. The children participated in a variety of workshops and enjoyed
meeting and working with Year 6 children from other schools.

All children participated in Clean Up Australia and World Environment Day campaigns
through actively supporting the local community in cleaning up local parks, beaches and
playing fields. Our student leaders attended the RSL ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day
commemorative services.

The Edmund Rice Stage Band performed for the whole school entertaining the children. The
students from St Joseph’s Catholic High School also visited performing in the areas of music,
dance and drama.

**Meeting the Needs of All Students**

At Stella Maris Catholic School teachers implement a variety of strategies and planned
learning experiences to enhance student learning and to cater for a wide variety of learning
styles and abilities.

During 2008 the school received Government Funding to support twelve children identified
with special needs. Support was provided through the development of Individual Learning
Plans (ILP) in teaching Programs that clearly identify learning experiences that are
differentiated to meet the needs of individual children. Three School Support Officers
continue to support teachers in the classroom working with individuals and small groups.
Timetables were revised in 2008 ensuring that optimum support is being provided. Children
are monitored through the Review Committee, which meets twice each Term. Children with
specific learning difficulties in Literacy and/or Numeracy, Behavioural and/or Social Skills
are presented targeting specific areas of concern. Funded release has been provided for
teachers to develop Individual Education Plans (IEP) using the Catholic Educations online
tool. Teachers have met with parents to plan, develop and evaluate student progress. A
Special Education teacher has supported teachers 1½ days each week assisting the classroom
teachers in Numeracy and Literacy.

The Reading Recovery Program continued in 2008. The Program supports children
experiencing difficulty in the early acquisition of literacy skills. We have seven trained
Reading Recovery teachers and one Reading Recovery Support Teacher. Seven children have
been successfully been discontinued from the program this year. 24% of Year 1 had access to
Reading Recovery.

The Blue Scope Steel Sports Program was a new initiative in 2008. The program focuses
specifically on the development of fundamental motor skills in children who need additional
support in this area. Nine children participated in the program, which will again be offered in
2009. A social skills program was also initiated to support children who require assistance in
establishing and maintaining relationships with their peers. The success of the program will
see it further refined and developed in 2009 supporting the practices of restorative justice.

**Expanding Learning Opportunities**

Children in Stage 3 were encouraged to participate in the Arch Diocese of Sydney Religious
Education Art Competition. Selected work was submitted for display in St Mary’s Cathedral
during the season of Advent.

All children from K-6 participated in the Life Education Program supporting our Personal
Development and Health Program. Physical Education lessons continued weekly, focusing
on the development of Fundamental Motor Skills, Gymnastics, Games and Dance. A Gross Motor Program continued for Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 with parents supporting this school initiative. Children participate in swimming, athletics and cross country carnivals at school, Regional, Diocesan and National levels. Diocesan Gala Day opportunities were offered to Stage 2 and 3 children in Soccer, Netball, Basketball and Cricket. Three teams were also entered in the NSW Catholic Basketball Competition held at Goulburn.

Year 6 enjoyed the experience of a school camp at Berry Sport and Recreation Centre. Throughout the school a wide variety of excursions were planned and implemented to enrich and support student learning including Canberra, Sydney, Minnamurra Rainforest, Botanical Gardens and Symbio Animal Park.

The Premiers Reading Challenge was again offered in 2008 with children in Years 2-6 being encouraged to participate. Those children who took the challenge were rewarded with certificates in recognition of their achievements. Year 6 children participated in the University of Wollongong’s Science Fair. Children in Years 3-6 were also given the opportunity to participate in the University of New South Wales Mathematics and English competition.

Children participated in the Southern Illawarra Catholic Schools (SICS) planned enrichment days in the areas of Mathematics, Early Stage 1 and Stage 1, Creative Arts, Stage 2 and Science for Stage 3. They were also presented with opportunities to participate in liturgical celebrations, school choirs, dance groups and other school celebrations throughout the year.

**Professional Learning**

The implementation of the School Review and Improvement framework has been the focus of professional development in 2008. Mathematics consultant Anita Chin worked with teachers in developing teaching strategies for Mathematics that engage and challenge. Two teachers attended the special education forum and Speech Pathologist Sophie O’Connell presented a workshop on receptive and expressive language disorders. The Year 4 Teachers attended the Religious Literacy writing and marking workshops and Stage 3 teachers explored strategies for improving writing and spelling.

Our Learning Communities Project for 2008 was a joint project with St Paul’s Catholic Primary School Albion Park exploring Restorative Justice Practices. The Marist Youth Care Team facilitated workshops with the Leadership Team, Staff, Year 6 children and parents. These practices will be further explored over the coming years.

**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) testing program for the purposes of diagnosing individual learning needs and reviewing whole class teaching programs. Information on student progress is communicated on a regular basis and external assessment results are discussed with parents on an individual basis annually.

**Religious Literacy Assessment**

The Religious Literacy Assessment program for Year 4 students as successfully implemented within our school in 2008.
The school cohort consisted of 36 Year 4 students who sat the Religious Literacy Assessment Workbook (Part A) on 1 September and 43 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:

- Knowledge of key symbols, signs and rituals of the Catholic Tradition,
- Identifying the ten commandments,
- Knowledge of Mary, and
- Knowledge of the Resurrection and Pentecost.

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:

- Demonstrate an awareness of how they experience the presence of Jesus in their lives.

Students in Part B displayed improvements in their ability to work with and apply the religious knowledge gained during their One with God’s Creation Unit. These responses included an understanding and appreciation of creation and one’s place in it, including the call for stewardship for the earth.

For Part A 5.4% of students were placed in the developing level, 64.9% in the achieving level and 29.7% were in the extending level.

For Part B 14% of students were placed in the developing level, 53.5% in the achieving level and 32.6% were in the extending level.

Combining Parts A and B, 8% of our students were placed in the developing level, 51% in the achieving level and 40.5% were in the extending level for Religious Literacy.

**NAPLAN**

There were 47 Year 3 and 50 Year 5 students participated in the 2008 National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy.

98% of Year 3 children achieved at or above the National Minimum Standards in Reading, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation.

100% of Year 3 children achieved at or above in Writing and 96% in Numeracy.

94% of Year 5 children achieved at or above the National Minimum Standards in Reading, 96% in Writing, 92% in Spelling and 98% in Grammar and Punctuation. 94% of children achieved at or above the National Minimum Standards in Numeracy.

The data received by the school has been comprehensively analysed by the school leadership team and teachers to identify key focus areas for school improvement in 2009.
Stella Maris Primary School
Shellharbour
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.

### NAPLAN 2008: % in Bands

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<th></th>
<th>YEAR 3</th>
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<td>Bands 3 and 4</td>
<td>Bands 5 and 6</td>
<td>Bands 7 and 8</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>50%</td>
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<td>45%</td>
<td>38%</td>
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<td>53%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</td>
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<td>58%</td>
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<td>50%</td>
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<td>47%</td>
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<td>14%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>23%</td>
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**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.

### NAPLAN 2008: % AT or ABOVE NMS

<table>
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<th>YEAR 3</th>
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<td>National</td>
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<tr>
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<td>School</td>
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<td>Spelling</td>
<td>School</td>
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<td>National</td>
<td>97%</td>
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<td>94%</td>
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Parent, Student & Staff Satisfaction

All families in the school received a parent survey. A total of 209 were issued and 114 were returned completed. The majority of the survey responses for all questions fell in the Strongly Agree and Agree categories especially in relation to our teaching about the Catholic tradition, opportunities for parent involvement and communication of information.

128 Student surveys were returned from Years 4, 5 & 6 and again the majority of responses were in the Strongly Agree and Agree categories.

16 staff surveys were returned with the majority in the Strongly Agree and Agree categories. There were no responses in the Disagree or Strongly Disagree categories.

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 & Religious Education
- Pedagogy
- Students & their Learning
- Parents, Partnership, Consultation & Communication

School Review and Improvement components to be reviewed in 2009:

- Catholic Life & Religious Education
- Students & their Learning
- Pedagogy
- Human Resources, Leadership & Management
- Resources, Finance & Facilities
- Parents, Partnership, Consultation & Communication