Holy Cross
Catholic Primary School
Helensburgh

Annual School Report
2009
About This Report

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

The Annual School Report to the Community for this year provides the school community with fair, reliable and objective information about school performance measures and policies, as determined by the Minister for Education and Training.

The Report also outlines information regarding School Review & Improvement 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.

Accordingly, the Report demonstrates accountability to regulatory bodies, the school community and the Catholic Education Office (CEO). This Report has been approved by Wollongong CEO to ensure compliance with all NSW Board of Studies requirements for Registration and Accreditation.

This Report complements and is supplementary to school newsletters and other regular communications. Following its submission to the NSW Board of Studies, the Report will be presented to the Parent Body and be available on the school’s website by 30 June 2010.

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

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School
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Helensburgh NSW 2508
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Fax: (02) 4294 3473
Email: info@hchdow.woll.catholic.edu.au
Website: www.hchdow.woll.catholic.edu.au

Parish Priest: Fr Patrick Vaughan
Principal: Mrs Mary Bryant
Date: 11 December 2009
Vision Statement

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

Message from Key School Bodies

Principal’s Message

Holy Cross School’s Annual Report provides the local and wider communities the opportunity to review the development and achievements of the school in 2009. The school, with the support of our parish Priest, Father Patrick Vaughan continues to provide an excellent Catholic Education for the families of our parish and supports them in living their Catholic ideals.

At Holy Cross we are committed to continuous review and improvement in order to ensure excellence in teaching and learning.

Certainly 2009 has been a year of sadness with fire destroying half of our school and a year of significant activity with the construction of a Covered Outdoor Learning Area (COLA) made possible by the National Pride in our Schools Grant from the Australian Government.

Parent Involvement

Holy Cross had another busy and successful year in 2009. The Fete and Golf Day were the highlights of the schools parent body social calendar. Both events brought together a dedicated team of parents to volunteer their time and efforts in working to ensure a successful result. The significant funds raised went towards supplying interactive whiteboards and computers.

The strong bond that exists within the school community was demonstrated by the number of parents who showed a willingness to lend a hand when required; this was particularly evident at the time of the school fire.

As parents we all share a common goal which is to support the school staff in providing the children with the very best learning environment possible.

Parents and Friends Association, President

Student Leadership

Our Student Leadership at Holy Cross has played an important role in many ways. We have lead by example, had a positive influence on the behaviour of younger students and aided in creating a welcoming and supportive school environment.
We were able to experience leadership through the participation in four of the eight Leadership groups. The Leadership Day had a positive influence on our understanding of leadership and our contribution as leaders.

School Captains

School Context

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School is a Catholic Systemic co-educational school located in Helensburgh. The school caters for students in Years K-6 and has a current enrolment of 191. Holy Cross is situated in the northern most suburb of Wollongong. It is primarily a single stream school that caters for the Helensburgh, Stanwell Tops, Stanwell Park and Otford areas. Due to its physical isolation, surrounded by national parks, Helensburgh is a very close knit community.

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

The school is administered by a Leadership Team comprising the Principal, Assistant Principal, Religious Education Coordinator, and Middle Leader 1. Holy Cross is a school community committed to the Catholic ethos, values and traditions. The spiritual growth and welfare of each student, along with sound educational practices is a shared responsibility of the Parish Priest, Principal, staff and parents under the supervision of both Catholic and Government educational authorities.

Student Enrolments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2009</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
<th>LBOTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>96</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Diocesan Enrolment Policy and Procedures exist to assist schools in the equitable prioritising of enrolment applications and in order to ensure that the requirements of State and Commonwealth legislation are met. This documentation can be found on the Catholic Education Office website: www.dow.catholic.edu.au then go to the link Policies. No changes were made to this Diocesan Policy in 2009.

Student Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2009</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>94.5%</td>
<td>95.6%</td>
<td>94.0%</td>
<td>94.2%</td>
<td>89.4%</td>
<td>92.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Holy Cross School follows the CEO attendance policy where students are required to supply an explanation for non-attendance. In the event that this information is not forthcoming, a note is sent to parents asking for reasons for non-attendance. If, after two weeks there is no explanation, the SSO attending to the roll will change the roll from unknown to unexplained.
### Staffing Profile

There are a total of 14 teachers and 7 support staff at Holy Cross Catholic Primary School. This number includes 8 full-time, 6 part-time teachers.

### 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 | 0% |
| Do not have qualifications as above but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context | 0% |

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

### Teacher Attendance and Retention

The average daily teacher attendance rate for 2009 was 97.10%. This does not include planned leave such as maternity or long service leave. The teacher retention rate from 2008 to 2009 was 79%.

### Professional Learning

Professional learning opportunities are highly valued and sought by all members of Holy Cross Catholic Primary School staff. During 2009 school personnel undertook a range of professional learning activities related to improving student outcomes.

These included:
- In-servicing on the use of Smartboards;
- Behaviour Management;
- “On Holy Ground”, a Catholic Ecological Perspective;
- Phonemic Awareness;
- Origo Mathematics Conference;
- Sexuality in a Catholic Context;
- Technology for Learning; and
- Leading Literacy and Numeracy.

School based expenditure on professional learning in 2009 was $7,500. This is in addition to expenditure on professional learning opportunities provided by the Catholic Education Office.
Catholic Life & Religious Education

During 2009, the Parish Priest, Staff and Parents of Holy Cross have continued to share the responsibility for the spiritual growth, welfare and education of the students. Liturgical celebrations continued to provide opportunities for the Holy Cross Faith Community to celebrate its commitment to Christ, looking to Him as the spiritual guide. Students and Staff joined parishioners regularly for Mass, and to celebrate special feast days.

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

The school has involved itself in parish celebrations such as Family Masses and most importantly the Parish Sacramental Program. This year eighteen children receive their First Eucharist and twenty four children received the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Staff continued their faith formation through weekly communal prayer and a Spirituality Day at Br Doran House in Stanwell Park, which centred on Ecological Conversion.

In Term 3, Senior Stage 3 students spent a day at Doran House at Stanwell Park focussing on Christian Leadership in preparation for Confirmation. As well, they joined with other Year 6 students in the Diocese for Prayer and Conversation with the Bishop. Following the legacy of the school’s foundress, Blessed Mary McKillop, “Never see a need without doing something about it,” support continued for those less fortunate, by donating money raised through whole school activities led and organised by Stage 3 leaders. The school also supported the winter clothing appeal and the Christmas Hamper appeal for St Vincent de Paul. Instead of exchanging presents this year, the Staff has again donated the money to Caritas.

Religious Literacy Assessment

The Religious Literacy Assessment program for Year 4 students was successfully implemented within schools across the diocese in 2009. In 2009 the school cohort consisted of 39 Year 4 students who sat the Religious Literacy Assessment Workbook (Part A) on September 7, 2009 and 4 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.

For Part A 0% of students were placed in the developing level, 48.7% in the achieving level and 51.3% were in the extending level.

For Part B 0% of students were placed in the developing level, 39% in the achieving level and 61% were in the extending level.
Combining Parts A and B, 0% of students were placed in the developing level, 46.2% in the achieving level and 53.8% were in the extending level for Religious Literacy.

**Financial Summary**

The Parents and Friends Association (P&F) was again very generous with their support, allocating $24,620 toward the purchase of Information Communication Learning Technology (ICLT) equipment, support of the school Library and support of buses and expenses for sport. A sum of $3,500 was also donated by parents as contributions towards the school football teams.

The following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for Holy Cross Catholic Primary School for the year ended 31 December 2009. This data is taken from the 2009 financial return to the Australian Government, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.
Student Welfare

Introduction

Staff at Holy Cross are committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for the school community. In 2009 the school’s Pastoral Care and Discipline Policy ensured that the school reflected the National Safe School’s Framework, characterised by fairness, mutual trust, respect and reconciliation. Access to all Policies and Guidelines can be obtained by contacting the school office.

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

A Catholic Care counsellor worked at the school one day per fortnight and provided student counselling when required. The Pals Program was integrated into Kinder and Stage 1 again in 2009. The buddy system operating between Kindergarten and Stage 3 students continued and played a valuable role in assisting the transition into school for the Kindergarten students.

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

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

“The Complaints and Grievances Procedures can be found on the Catholic Education Office website: www.dow.catholic.edu.au then go to the link Policies.

Pastoral Care

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Wollongong are committed to a safe and supportive environment. The principles, guidelines and procedures set out in the Policy documents *Maintaining Right Relationships* and *Safe Work Environment* are the framework for school leaders, students, staff, parents and the wider community to develop a safe and supportive environment. The Diocesan *Complaints Handling Procedures* forms an important element in the Diocese’s commitment to ensuring safe and supportive environments for school communities. These documents can be found on the Catholic Education Office website: www.dow.catholic.edu.au then go to the link Policies. No changes were made to these Diocesan documents in 2009.
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.

### Learning and Teaching

#### Introduction

Quality Catholic Learning and Teaching is a fundamental priority at Holy Cross Catholic Primary School. In 2009, school focus areas and initiatives reflected Diocesan and National priorities to promote quality learning opportunities for all students.

#### Curriculum and Pedagogy

Throughout 2009, significant learning and growth has occurred for both students and staff. Board of studies requirements and courses in Religious Education have been attended to in accordance with Diocesan Policy. In 2009 there has been encouragement and support for students to be more responsible for their own learning. Inquiry based learning and personal interest projects involving all areas of the Curriculum have been a feature of many classrooms throughout the school. The use of Bloom’s Taxonomy, Multiple Intelligence Matrix and Gardner’s Thinking Hats in most classes has broadened the learning spectrum and allowed teachers to experiment with more diverse teaching strategies. Continued co-operative planning within stage groups allows for teacher expertise and support to influence better student outcomes.

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

#### Technology Supporting Learning

The year has seen continued progress in integrating ICLT into the learning and teaching in classrooms. The financial commitment made by the school and the P&F in providing the necessary hardware and peripheral tools has continued, culminating with the installation of 2 extra Smart Boards and five new Macbooks.

#### Cross-Curriculum

The promotion of Literacy learning is part of the school’s vision of excellence in education. The current literacy plan was implemented throughout the year and funds were provided for the purchase of resources to assist in the Literacy development of students from K-6. Teachers are continuing to implement the 2004 Mathematics Syllabus and are supported with relevant professional development and staff meetings. Emphasis this year has centred on goal setting for both staff and students. Classroom teaching has continued to be influenced by the “Count Me In Too” program, now embedded in the Early Stage 1, Stage 1 and Stage 2
programs. Students are carefully monitored and tracked to ensure that they are learning developmentally and are challenged by their learning experiences.

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

Meeting the Needs of All Students

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

The School Review Committee provides teachers with assistance in assessing and monitoring those students who are identified as needing extra support in the classroom. The school also received funding to support four students identified with special educational needs. The use of Individualised Education Programmes for students with special needs includes support by school support officers working in partnership with teaching staff.

In 2009, 11 students in Junior Stage 1 were successful graduates of the Reading Recovery program and are now being closely monitored by their classroom teachers. Small group learning in the form of Guided Reading and Writing groups continues to meet specific needs.

Expanding Learning Opportunities

To enrich the curriculum, the staff at Holy Cross have provided many and varied opportunities for the students to excel. Students participated in a great variety of competitions. Stage 2 & 3 were given the opportunity to compete in the Australasian All Schools Competitions in Mathematics, English, Writing, Spelling, Computer Studies and Science. This year, overall, students received 36 Credits and 11 Distinctions. There were 52 students who also participated in the Premier’s Reading Challenge which encourages students to read a variety of quality literature and five students who received a Gold Certificate for completing the challenge each year for the past four years.

The teachers at Holy Cross have conducted excursions to museums, art galleries, State Parliament, walking tours in the local area, animal farms, aquariums, science centres, mines and the mounted Police. The school also experienced incursions relating to anti-bullying themes, African drumming and Christmas Celebration with Andrew Chin. The knowledge and experiences gained from such activities further enhance and support learning and growing. In addition, ICLT was utilised as a way to represent their findings in a more innovative and interesting way.
In the sporting arena, Holy Cross has been actively involved and well represented in a great number of sports. Apart from the annual swimming, cross-country, and athletics carnivals, there was also the Netball and Soccer Gala days, and the school had teams represent Holy Cross in Rugby League in the Paul McGregor and Rod Wishart Shields. During the year a number of students in Years 3-6 were selected to represent the Wollongong Diocese in sports such as Touch Football, Tennis, Cricket, Soccer, Cross-Country, Rugby League, Hockey, Athletics, Swimming and Softball. Holy Cross had five students nominated for Diocesan Sports Awards this year, with one student successful in winning the Diocesan Medal for Outstanding Primary Female athlete for her performances when representing the Diocese in Hockey, Athletics and Cricket. The school was successful in winning the award for Champion School at the Diocesan Athletics Carnival.

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

In Term 3, Leader of the State Opposition, Mr Barry O’Farrell visited Holy Cross to present the school with several plants for National Tree Planting Day. Guests on this day also included the Hon John Ajaka, Member of the NSW Upper House, Mr Lee Evans, representing the Heathcote State Electoral Conference, and Dr Paul McCann, Catholic Education Office Wollongong.

**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 Program 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.

**NAPLAN**

The NAPLAN was introduced for students in Years 3 and 5 in May 2008. 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.

Holy Cross performed very well in the NAPLAN this year. Every student who sat for the test in both Year 3 and Year 5 achieved at or above the National benchmarks in both Literacy and Numeracy. Holy Cross students also performed significantly better than the national cohorts in both Literacy and Numeracy, particularly in the areas of Reading, Grammar and Punctuation and Year 3 Spelling.
Student Achievement in Bands

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAPLAN % in Bands</th>
<th>2009:</th>
<th>YEAR 3</th>
<th>YEAR 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bands 1 and 2</td>
<td>Bands 3 and 4</td>
<td>Bands 5 and 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar &amp;</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>50%</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) represent students who are achieving AT the NMS. Students in all other Bands are achieving ABOVE the NMS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAPLAN % AT or ABOVE</th>
<th>2009: ABOVE</th>
<th>YEAR 3</th>
<th>YEAR 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parent, Student and Staff Satisfaction

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

School Review and Improvement

School Review and Improvement is an ongoing process of self evaluation measured against a commonly agreed set of criteria. It informs action planning at the school level to identify areas of strength and areas for improvement. Above all, Catholic schools must be good schools with a strong learning orientation and a strong sense of purpose. In all aspects of improving and developing, schools should be learning-centred, constantly striving for excellence and have the student as their primary focus.

School Review and Improvement components reviewed and rated in 2009:

- Key Area 1: Catholic Life and Religious Education
  - 1.3 Catholic Life and Culture
- Key Area 2: Students and their Learning
  - 2.1 Educational Potential
- Key Area 3: Pedagogy:
  - 3.3 Teaching Practices
  - 3.4 Pedagogy, Planning, Programming and Evaluation.

School Review and Improvement components to be reviewed and rated in 2010:

- Key Area 1: Catholic Life and Religious Education
  - 1.2 Religious Education
- Key Area 2: Students and their Learning
  - 2.2 Rights and Responsibilities
- Key Area 3: Pedagogy,
  - 3.2 Provision for the Diverse Needs of Learners
- 3.7 Professional Learning

- Key Area 6: Parents, Partnership, Consultation and Communication
  - 6.2 Reporting to the Community