About This Report

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, Ruse 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:

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School  
PO Box 806B  
Bradbury NSW 2560  
Ph: (02) 4525 6561  
Fax: (02) 4626 7434  
Email: info@stmdow.catholic.edu.au  
Website: www.stmdow.catholic.edu.au

Parish Priest: Fr Tony Daly  
Principal: Don Spencer  
Date: 11 December 2009
Vision Statement

In the spirit of truth and love the vision at St Thomas More Catholic 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

As Principal of St Thomas More Catholic Primary School Ruse I have pleasure in presenting the Annual School Report for the 2009 School Year.

The 2009 School Year has once again seen St Thomas More Catholic Primary School continue in its endeavours to provide a school of quality learning and teaching. Our school, through the National Schools Pride Program and the Building Education Revolution funding, has seen many building and refurbishment projects undertaken which have enhanced the aesthetics and learning environment for our students and staff. Plans for a new school hall have been submitted and we wait with anticipation for its completion late 2010.

The Annual School Report provides an opportunity for the community to reflect on and celebrate the significant achievements that have occurred this year. 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

This year, saw some new faces on the Parents and Friends (P&F) Committee the P&F. Our committee held many events this year including the Christmas Carols and Kindergarten Welcome, BBQs, McDonalds fundraising nights, Feast Day and Bunning’s BBQs, a contribution to the Mater Dei Fair and several working bees. In all 2009 was an enjoyable and successful year. Special mention must be made of the Fete Committee and the success of this years fete in difficult economic times. It really was an excellent day. The Mothers’ Club, which is a constant support to the P&F, proved their value once again by organising the Easter Raffle, Mother’s and Father’s Day stalls, chocolate fundraising drive and numerous hospitality events. All funds raised were put to providing equipment, supporting and maintaining the school and this benefitted those who attend it, namely our children. I’d like to congratulate the 2009 P&F committee and all parents who played a role in this year’s excellent result.

Parents & Friends Association, President
Student Leadership

The 2009 School Year was a very lively year for students and staff of St Thomas More. We removed the tradition of the student leader badges, whilst starting a new concept; the team leader badges. In Year 6 we formed teams, including the student newsletter team, the security team, the library team and many others. As school captains, we also attended various ceremonies and liturgies. We participated in the ANZAC day service where we laid a wreath at the base of the local memorial. Year 6 also lead Peer Support. This year it was all about reducing bullying in the school.

Every Monday morning the school and sport captains lead prayer and handed out awards. This year we assisted by the Religious Education Team. We also assisted the aboriginal elders during NAIDOC Week and during the blessing of the school plaques, which were made this year.
We wish the school community luck for the future.

School Captains

School Profile

School Context

St Thomas More Catholic 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. The school’s vision 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. 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 is a shared responsibility of the Parish Priest, Principal, Staff and Parents.

St Thomas More has benefited from a tradition enriched by the Sisters of the Good Samaritan and also the Marist Brothers due to Principals and staff who have worked at the school. St Thomas More Catholic Primary School encourages educational excellence by providing a relevant, stimulating and challenging curriculum. The school promotes stewardship by valuing, respecting and encouraging the unique gifts of every person. Students, staff, parents and pastor work and celebrate together in a spirit of true partnership.

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School is a Catholic Systemic co-educational school located in Campbelltown. The school caters for students in Years K-6 and has a current enrolment of three hundred and sixty six students.
Student Enrolments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2009</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
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<td>198</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>133</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>90.3%</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
<td>89.3%</td>
<td>89.3%</td>
<td>87.9%</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

It is a school expectation that if students are absent from school then a written note explaining the absence is given to the child’s class teacher, which in turn is documented and archived by office staff. If a note is not received, an absent reminder note is sent to parents and it is expected to be returned. If two absent reminder notes are not returned then an “unexplained/unjustified” absence is documented. In the event of a child having an excessive number of unexplained absences a phone call to parents by the Principal or representative is undertaken.

Staffing Profile

There are a total of 23 teachers and 10 support staff at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School. This number includes 18 full-time and 5 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 | % |
| Do not have qualifications as above but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context | % |
**Teacher Attendance and Retention**
The average daily teacher attendance rate for 2009 was 96.84%. This does not include planned leave such as maternity or long service leave. The teacher retention rate from 2008 to 2009 was 95%.

**Professional Learning**
Professional learning opportunities are highly valued and sought by all members of St Thomas More Catholic Primary School staff. During 2009 St Thomas More Catholic Primary School personnel undertook a range of professional learning activities related to improving student outcomes.

These included:

St Thomas More Catholic Primary whole school development days involved 33 staff.
These days focused on:
- Phonemic awareness and critical literacy;
- First aid training; and,
- Cosmology Spirituality.

Other professional learning activities provided at school level including CEO run courses:
- Attending the Stewardship Institute;
- Special Education Conference;
- Developing an understanding of and improving classroom practices in components of the Literacy block with emphasis on critical literacy, writing and phonemic awareness;
- Literacy and Numeracy;
- Enriching spirituality of staff;
- First aid training;
- Anaphylaxis and SAS training;
- School Wide Positive Behaviours Project;
- Berakah spirituality;
- Journey;
- Cosmology Spirituality;
- Masters in Religious Education;
- Enquiry learning;
- Smart Board technology;
- Diocesan Learning and Teaching Framework;
- Autism;
- Human sexuality;
- Peer Support Training;
- Information Technology; and
- Leadership conference.
The 23 teaching staff and 10 support staff were given the opportunity to participate in professional learning throughout 2009. The average expenditure by the school on professional learning per teacher was $548. In addition, professional learning opportunities were provided by the Catholic Education Office with an additional average expenditure per teacher of $9,200.

Catholic Life & Religious Education

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School seeks to promote its own Catholic Identity and the traditions of the Catholic Church. The school does 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, Father Daly, the Parish Priest celebrated a Welcoming Mass through which the school community welcomed new staff, students, their families and parishioners to the community. Fr Daly is very active in the school community, visiting each class at least once a term, administering the Sacrament of Penance to Years 3-6 children and celebrating whole school Masses at school. In addition, every term all students in Years K-6 travel by bus to the Parish Church to celebrate Mass with the Parish community. Families and parishioners 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’ in which Morning Prayer and Religious Education lessons focused on the concept of Stewardship. The promotion of Stewardship in the school and Parish was further enhanced this year through a film produced by the Stewardship Conference Committee about the Stewardship Program at St Thomas More. The Parish Priest, Principal, Religious Education Co-ordinator and two students were interviewed about the Stewardship Program and the film was presented at the 2009 Stewardship Conference held at Campbelltown Catholic Club. Each year a new Stewardship Team is established. Their role this year was to promote social justice issues and fundraising in the school. Stewardship Awards continued with students acknowledged for the use of their time, talents and treasures – the fundamental principals of the Stewardship Program.

The Catholic children of the school are active participants in the Parish Sacramental Program. In 2009 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 children of the Parish received the Sacrament of the Eucharist in Term 2 and the Sacrament of Confirmation was administered in Term 3.

A community highlight for 2009 was the Stations of the Cross at Maryfields. The St Thomas More Catholic Primary School community was privileged to participate in the presentation of
the Stations of the Cross to the general public. This was in conjunction with other Diocesan schools from the Macarthur region. The Bishop of the Diocese was in attendance and with the community they were very impressed with the reverence and preparation displayed by the students.

Prayer is an integral part of St Thomas More school life. Each day begins with school prayer during assembly and a prayer focus is evident in Religious Education lessons. The school celebrated many memorable liturgies in the new Prayer Room during 2009 such as the School Narrative Art Stations of the Cross, feast day celebrations such as the Feasts of Marcellin Champagnat and Mary MacKillop, student and staff prayer and Reconciliation. This room provides children, staff and parents a place to pray, reflect and receive the Sacraments in a more reverent and prayerful setting.

Catholic School’s Week was a major celebration in the school. This year a Grandparents Mass was incorporated into Catholic School’s Week. The focus was on the variety of people who make up the STM community and that Catholic Schools are welcoming schools. Open classrooms also occurred during the week.

In 2009 the students were involved in Social Justice Initiatives including fundraising activities for St Vincent de Paul, Caritas-Mission Week, Project Compassion, Victorian Bushfire Appeal and The Sisters of the Good Samaritan Foundation. A sum of $3,205.00 was donated to these worthy causes along with the many food hampers and Christmas presents donated by the students for the St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal.

The students in Year 6, along with other Year 6 students from within the Macarthur region, participated in a ‘Prayer and Conversation’ with Bishop Peter Ingham. The students in Year 5 and Year 6 participated in the Combined CEO Sydney/CEO Wollongong Christmas Art Competition. The children were asked to paint their reflection of a Gospel story relating to Christmas. The artwork of four students was selected to represent the Wollongong Diocese in this competition. The Year 4 students participated in the CEO Wollongong Religious Literacy Assessment and produced very creative and thoughtful creation tasks.

Various special celebrations and commemoration days were celebrated throughout the year. These included Ash Wednesday, St Patrick’s Day, St Joseph’s Day, The Annunciation, Diocesan Education Mass, Easter and Holy Week, Anzac Day, the Feast of the Assumption, The Feasts of Mary MacKillop, and Marcellin Champagnat, All Souls Day, the Annual Christmas Pageant and the St Thomas More Feast day Mass and celebration.

In 2009, the staff participated in an overnight retreat/spirituality day. The Spirituality day was held at Kangaroo Valley Bush Retreat and was facilitated by Sister Margaret Hinchey.
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 49 Year 4 students who sat the Religious Literacy Assessment Workbook (Part A) on 7 September and 49 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 Jesus and His teachings;
- Identifying key symbols, signs and rituals of the Catholic tradition;
- Identifying key aspects of the story of creation; and
- Identifying Christian ways of relating to others.

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 Sequence events in the Liturgical year and sequencing 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 8.2% of students were placed in the developing level, 73.5% in the achieving level and 18.4% were in the extending level.

For Part B 0% of students were placed in the developing level, 34% in the achieving level and 66% were in the extending level.

Combining Parts A and B, 2% of students were placed in the developing level, 59.2% in the achieving level and 38.8% were in the extending level for Religious Literacy.

Financial Summary

Financial administration and management procedures at St Thomas More Catholic 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 was maintained.

During 2009 normal school running costs were incurred. In addition, the St Thomas More Catholic Primary School underwent its annual building maintenance program which was
funded by the Parish School Enhancement and Debt Servicing Obligation (SEDSO) fund. The cost of this program was $17,599. The parish SEDSO fund also funded other major works such as the installation of four air conditioners ($9,840), storm water drainage ($472), maintenance of electrical and data circuits ($1,328) and the repair of roofing in the Stage 3 blocks ($852).

The Campbelltown Catholic Club was very generous in its donation to the school in 2009. The donation of $10 000 assisted in the payment for the new covered bus shelter.

During 2009 the school received funds through the Federal Government’s Building Education Revolution specifically the National Schools Pride funding. Funds to the sum of $150 000 were used to resurface the asphalt play area and painting of games on the asphalt, construction of a roof for the bus seating area, painting the big shed, relining of the walls of the classrooms, creation of an outdoor learning space for Stage 3 and the purchase of furniture and the purchase and installation of two smart boards. St Thomas More Catholic 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 2009. The funds provided by these two school community groups were used to purchase computers, reading materials, sporting ribbons and the subsidising of bus costs for the Wakakirri dance troupe.

The balance of funds carried forward for 2009 represented outstanding accounts and orders for the beginning of the 2010 School Year. Significant accounts among these were invoices for additional items to complete the National School Pride projects, landscaping projects to be conducted during the Christmas vacation and future landscaping of the new hall, preparation work for the new hall, and the purchase of furniture for classrooms.

The following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for St Thomas More 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
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.

Pastoral Care
St Thomas More Catholic Primary School continues to provide valuable support to all members of the school community. The school strives to promote positive relationships amongst all members of the community, especially the students. Throughout the year children were encouraged to do the best they could. Their achievements were 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. In 2009, in response to the School Wide Positive Behaviour for Learning (SPB4L) Program, affirming playground behaviour has been a major focus. Stewardship Awards were also given to children in recognition of them using their time, talents and treasure.

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, 2009, focused on the program Anti Bullying Program – Speaking Up.

A CatholicCare counsellor was reassigned to the school. The counsellor provided support on a weekly basis to children and families. St Thomas More ‘Kid’s Club’ continued to be well attended. The aim of this program was to create a fair, co-operative and fun lunchtime setting where all children were treated with respect and dignity. The social skills program introduced in 2007 for those children who are on the Autism spectrum and which runs during lunch, continued to be implemented by the School Support Officers.

A Seasons Program was provided for children identified as suffering loss due to a death or separation in their family. The revised Pastoral Care Policy and Anti Bullying Policy were ratified in February 2009 and these were supported by the school community. The SPB4L Program has taken on a significant role in the school. The focus for 2009 was to establish consistent routines and behaviours in outside of classroom settings.

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:
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.

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**Learning and Teaching**

**Introduction**

At St Thomas More Catholic 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 Diocesan School Review and Improvement process provided a focus for initiatives in learning and teaching in 2009.

**Curriculum & Pedagogy**

During 2009 St Thomas More Catholic Primary School continued on its journey of improvement by implementing the Learning Communities Project, ‘Beyond the Basics’. By embracing this program literacy needs were addressed through:

- An expectation that all staff implement critical literacy teaching practices and maintain practice put into place;
- An approach to guided writing and how spelling and grammar relate;
- An approach to understanding the different writing text types; and,
- An awareness of spelling choices and how these skills can be integrated into the reading and writing process.

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.

At St Thomas More there is an appreciation of the importance of learning technology as an effective tool for learning and teaching. During 2009, children had to desktop computers either in their own classrooms (Kindergarten, Yrs 1, 2 and 3) or when visiting the Discovery Centre. All children and staff had 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. Smart board technology was introduced to the stage three classrooms with the hope of making this technology available to the other stages in future years.

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 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. The St Thomas More staff was also led through the process of creating more meaningful and rich assessment tasks focusing on the Religious Education Key Learning Area. The rich assessment tasks designed and implemented reflected the Diocesan Learning and Teaching Framework.

Cross Curriculum

Where possible the learning and teaching programs were integrated across the Key Learning Areas and these were implemented in a variety of ways.

During Catholic School’s Week the St Thomas More school community celebrated with an open day. Parents had the opportunity to visit classrooms and join in activities with their children. The purpose of Catholic School’s Week was 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.

Several classes took the opportunity to enhance learning through excursions and all classes attended visiting performances and workshops. Year 3 and 4 students visited the Power House Museum, Kindergarten visited Fairfield City Farm and Year 1 was enthralled by the workings of the International Airport during their visit to Mascot. The Year 5 children enjoyed a three-day camp to Wedderburn Christian Camp 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 Project’. The students visited 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 Forensic Science. The students also interacted with the students from John Therry Catholic High School and Year 5 from Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Primary School, Rosemeadow.

Indigenous perspectives were included within at least one unit of work in Human Society and Its Environment with greater focus undertaken in this area in Year 3 and Year 6. During NAIDOC week celebrations, visiting elders from within the local community assisted in blessing the school’s land and buildings.

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School continues to develop links with St Patrick’s College. During 2009 students from the College were invited to and assisted at the school’s Athletics and Swimming Carnivals. The children in Year 5 and Year 3 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 Premier’s Reading Challenge. This reading initiative is designed to encourage and increase a love of literature.

Meeting the needs of all students

Teachers at St Thomas More are committed to ensuring that all students’ needs are met. In addressing the individual needs of students, a variety of individual support structures were provided. These include peer reading, school assistant intervention and Reading Recovery. In 2009 teachers who had children with special education needs in their classes implemented an Individual Education Plan (IEP) to identify academic, social and emotional needs. Transition meetings were held each term to inform parents of progress and keep communication between home and school.

The Reading Recovery Program continued to offer an intensive reading program to the students in Year 1, where 15 students accessed the program. This year 13 students were successfully discontinued from Reading Recovery. One of the Reading Recovery teachers was also able to provide literacy support to the Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 classes.

Students with specific learning needs continued 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 met regularly to review students who were identified with specific needs and strategies are put in place to assist both the child and teacher with their learning and teaching.

The Diocesan Early Literacy Assessment Program (ELA) was implemented in Kindergarten and Year 1 and the information obtained through this assessment was used to inform teachers 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 maths activities during National Literacy and Numeracy Week specifically ‘Reach for the Stars’. During 2009 an enrichment group was formed in order to support children identified in each stage who needed to be further challenged in their learning.

An initiative undertaken in 2009 was the reviewing and implementation of the Kindergarten orientation and transition process. This initiative was carried out during Term 4. An information evening facilitated by a Speech Therapist and an Occupational Therapist was offered to the 2010 Kindergarten parents. An orientation information session for children and parents was held, and over a period of two weeks the children were given an opportunity to once again visit the Kindergarten rooms whilst at the same time an induction information session was held for parents. Children who were identified as needing further transition time were invited to attend another session in the Kindergarten classrooms. Very favourable feedback was given to this process.
Expanding Learning Opportunities

Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) needs were well catered for through the weekly PE and Sport lessons. Due to staffing arrangements a specialist PE teacher was employed for Terms 2, 3 and 4. The children had the opportunity to participate in fundamental motor skills and gymnastic lessons under the supervision of trained personnel. All children participated in the School Cross Country and Athletics Carnivals. Children from Year 3 to Year 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, and Rugby League. The school was represented by the Senior and Junior Soccer Teams at the Annual Tiger Shield Soccer Tournament. A number of students represented St Thomas More at Diocesan and MacKillop trials with six children being selected in teams.

A highlight of the 2009 School Year was the performance of the Wakakirri dance troupe. This was the first time for many years that St Thomas More had entered into Wakakirri. The children performed their heat at Bankstown Town Hall and were then chosen to perform in the finals at the Sydney Entertainment Centre. Children, staff and parents enjoyed the highly commended performance and experience.

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, and children from the choir were participants in Parish Masses, school liturgies and the school Christmas celebrations. The choir also had the opportunity to perform at the Annual Fete and for the Campbelltown Probus Group at their Annual Christmas gathering.

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

The ‘Active Afternoon Program’ continues to be very popular among the children from St Thomas More. On average, sixty-five 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.

The children in Year 5 and Year 6 were given the opportunity to enter art works in ‘The Christmas Story Art Competition and Exhibition 2009’. This competition is organised by the Archdiocese of Sydney. Four 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 2009 School Year the focus was on developing and improving the Literacy and Numeracy in the school. A staff development day
and many staff meetings were facilitated with a focus on phonemic awareness, critical Literacy, writing and maths planning. Assessment in Religious Education and the use of the Diocesan Learning and Teaching Framework (DLTF) were also a focus during 2009. The staff of St Thomas More continues to benefit 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.

Other professional learning included analysis of the National Assessment Plan for Literacy and Numeracy data, attendance at Spirituality Courses including Journey and Berekah, mentoring beginning teachers, Peer Support training, First Aid training, Human Sexuality, Online Autism Certificate, Information Communication Learning Technology (ICLT) and the participation in the Diocesan Pastoral Care Forum. Staff also participated in the Diocesan project, School Wide Positive Behaviour for Learning.

**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 Year 3 and Year 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.

In May 2009 the children in Year 3 and Year 5 sat the NAPLAN tests. There were 43 Year 3 and 49 Year 5 students who sat these tests. Overall the students performed better in Literacy than Numeracy. The best performances in both Year 3 and Year 5 were in writing and reading. According to close examination of the results the school has identified numeracy and spelling/punctuation as the main areas which require further attention in 2010.

**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.
## NAPLAN 2009: % in Bands

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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) represent students who are achieving AT the NMS. Students in all other Bands are achieving ABOVE the NMS.

## NAPLAN 2009: % AT or ABOVE NMS

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Parent, Student and 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 parents believe that the school is adequately resourced and the grounds and buildings are maintained to a satisfactory level. Parents believe there are enough opportunities to be involved in the school and that there is enough communication between school and parents. Those parents who responded were happy with the way their child’s reading needs are being met and that their children have an environment that stimulates their learning. With regards to the Religious Education, parents made comment that stewardship is a great focus and that the liturgies the children and parents experience are invaluable.

Of the 22 staff who responded to the Wollongong Diocese Employee survey 90% believe the school leadership team are good role models, 90% have confidence in the school leadership team and 95% believe the school leadership team gives support. All staff find their work interesting and challenging, 90% believe there is a sense of positive relationships within their work environment and 85% believe they have the opportunity for professional growth. Although overwhelmingly positive the school recognises the need for more feedback, affirmation and recognition of staff in the workplace.

The majority of student responses to the survey items were overwhelmingly positive in each area. Results indicated that the students were collectively proud to be members of the St Thomas More community. They also wholeheartedly acknowledged the importance of the school as a means of fostering their understanding of the Catholic Faith. Whilst the responses were generally positive, they also indicated a need to continue to undertake initiatives that build and embed a safe and supportive framework within the school, one that is primarily built upon the principle of enhancing and maximizing the learning potential of each child.

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
  - 1.2 Religious Education
- Key Area 2: Students and their Learning
  - 2.4 Integration of Information and Communication Technology
- Key Area 3: Pedagogy
  - 3.3 Teaching Practices
  - 3.6 School Climate, Learning Environment and Relationships
- Key Area 5: Resources, Finances and Facilities
  - 5.4 Financial Management
- Key Area 6: Parents, Partnerships, Consultation and Communication
  - 6.1 Parent Involvement

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

- 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 4: Human Resources Leadership and Management
  - 4.4 Succession planning
- Key Area 5: Resources, Finance and Facilities
  - 5.4 Financial Management
- Key Area 6: Parents, Partnership, Consultation and Communications
  - 6.3 Linkages with the Wider Community