About This Report

St Michael’s Catholic Primary School, Nowra 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 Michael’s Catholic Primary School
PO Box 126
Nowra NSW 2541
Ph: (02) 4421 6360
Fax: (02) 4423 2861
Email: info@smndow.catholic.edu.au
Website: www.smndow.catholic.edu.au

Parish Priest: Fr Patrick Faherty

Principal: Mrs Cheryle Brennan (Relieving)
Date: December 2009
Vision Statement

The children, together with Priests, Staff and Parents strive to provide a community, in which the Catholic faith is taught, valued, lived and celebrated. As a learning community, children are encouraged to reach their full potential.

Principal’s Message

As part of our School Review and Improvement (SRI) process our school reviewed St Michael’s strategic direction. As a school community we recognise the importance and the key role that a Catholic culture plays in underpinning an effective learning community. We acknowledge that education and community connectedness is significantly enhanced by genuine caring and positive relationships among staff, students, parents, Parish and the wider community. We believe that students need to be engaged in relevant, appropriate and powerful learning experiences. In addition, our staff is committed to ongoing learning and engagement in professional dialogue that fuels creative practices which in turn improve learning gains for our students.

Finally, our learning community cultivates reflective practices that contribute to a deeper understanding of professional applications with reciprocity in highly effective practices that lead to improved learning outcomes for students.

Parent Involvement

Our first fundraiser was our very popular Easter Egg Raffle. We introduced our first Car Boot Sale and the Parents & Friends Association (P&F) ran canteens at the Soccer Gala Day and Diocesan Cross Country. Our major fundraiser each year is our Annual Fete. The response and support from our families was fantastic.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the school families that have assisted the P&F this year either with their time or by sending in goods for our fundraisers. With your help we have been able to contribute $2,000 towards our interactive whiteboards, $2,000 for students sporting equipment, $1,000 to the Library and $8,000 for Literacy resources.

Parents and Friends Association, President

Student Leadership

This year, being School Captains has been a great honour and privilege. We have learnt many new skills in our role. We have grown in confidence through our participation in school assemblies and additional leadership responsibilities. We have also enjoyed working with our fellow students, St Michael’s School and Parish staff. The role of school captain 2009 has been an excellent experience and will be remembered for the rest of our lives.

School Captains
School Profile

School Context
St Michael’s Catholic Primary School is a Catholic Systemic co-educational school located in Nowra. The school caters for students in years K-6 and has a current enrolment of 450. There is a Learning Centre for children with special needs. The provision of sound educational practice is a shared responsibility of the Parish Priest, Principal, Staff and Parents under the supervision of the Catholic Education Office, Wollongong. The Principal is responsible for administering the school assisted by an Assistant Principal, three Coordinators and a Religious Education Coordinator.

In 1893, the Sisters of the Good Samaritan established St Michael’s to serve the needs of the Nowra Catholic Community. The school still maintains the Good Samaritan tradition. The Parish covers most of the Shoalhaven region and includes five station churches.

Student Enrolments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
<th>LBOTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>44</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></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>2009</td>
<td>91.9%</td>
<td>92.2%</td>
<td>89.6%</td>
<td>93.2%</td>
<td>90.2%</td>
<td>92.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is a requirement of the Education Reform Act 1990 that a daily record of attendances is accurately kept and that we obtain a signed note from the parent/caregiver explaining any absences.

If any student is absent from school for longer then three days at a time, parents are required to telephone the office, and then send in a written note on the child’s return. If any student holidays during the school year parent/carers are asked to send in ahead of time a note explaining the absence.

Parents will be contacted regularly about unexplained or repeated absences.
Staffing Profile

There are a total of 30 teachers and 9 support staff at St Michael’s Catholic Primary School. This number includes 21 full-time and 9 part-time teachers.

Teacher Standards

Teacher qualifications fall into 1 of 3 categories for all teaching staff responsible for delivering the curriculum:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised by AEI - NOOSR*</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia within AEI-NOOSR* guidelines but lack formal teacher qualifications</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not have qualifications as above but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Teacher Attendance and Retention

The average daily teacher attendance rate for 2009 was 95.80%. This does not include planned leave such as maternity or long service leave. The teacher retention rate from 2008 to 2009 was 84%.

Professional Learning

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

These included:
- Working Together to Succeed Mathematics Project K-1;
- Leading Literacy and Numeracy Learning;
- Building Capacity and Sustainability within Special Education;
- Interwrite Whiteboard Professional Learning;
- Learning For Leadership;
- Positive Partnerships: Supporting Students on the Autism Spectrum;
- First Aid;
- Anaphylaxis Training; and
- School Review and Improvement.

School based expenditure on professional learning in 2009 was $6,380. This is in addition to expenditure on professional learning opportunities provided by the Catholic Education Office.
Catholic Life & Religious Education

St Michael’s Catholic Primary School seeks to promote its own Catholic Identity and the traditions of the Catholic Church. This is supported by ensuring the visibility throughout the school of symbols of Catholic faith, including “Sacred Spaces” in classrooms, school foyer and staffroom. Liturgies are planned in liaison with the Parish Priest and class teachers to ensure the liturgical celebrations enable the life of the school to be linked with the Parish community and the mission of the Church. Most Friday mornings a Grade joins with the Parishioners in celebrating Mass. Once a month the students are actively involved in a variety of ministries at Sunday Mass. The school community celebrated Ash Wednesday, Grandparents’ Mass, and the Feast of the Assumption, St Michael’s Feast Day and Year 6 Graduation Mass.

School and Parish support each other in the Sacramental Programs: Reconciliation in Year 2, First Eucharist in Year 3 and Year 6 students receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit when they make their Confirmation during a special Mass celebrated by Bishop Peter Ingham. Each Program is enhanced and supported by a retreat day, two parent information evenings and a prayer evening. Involved are the Parish Priest, catechists, teachers and parents.

The school has continued to promote a culture of social justice. Students learned about the work of Caritas and raised money for Project Compassion. The school also raised funds for Catholic Mission, St Vincent de Paul and Bushfire Appeal VIC. A total of $4,791 was donated to these organisations.

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 60 Year 4 students who sat the Religious Literacy Assessment Workbook (Part A) on 7 September 2009 and 66 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.

Students demonstrated a high level of performance when answering open-ended, true/false and word blank questions. This high performance was particularly noticeable in their ability to:

- recognise the qualities of Christians; and
- identify key symbols, signs and ritual of the Church.

Students’ responses showed a need for them to develop their capacity to answer multiple choice, matching and timeline questions. This is evidenced in their ability to:

- recall the events of Holy Week and the Christmas Season, and
- demonstrate their understanding of the Sacraments.

Students in Part B displayed their ability to work with and apply their religious literacy knowledge.
The performance of each student was described as developing, achieving or extending.

For Part A 16.7% of students were placed in the developing level, 61.7% in the achieving level and 21.7% were in the extending level.

For Part B 19.7% of students were placed in the developing level, 68.2% in the achieving level and 12.1% were in the extending level.

Combining Parts A and B, 21.7% of students were placed in the developing level, 63.3% in the achieving level and 15% were in the extending level for Religious Literacy.

**Financial Summary**

During 2009 there were three main sources of income for St Michael’s School. These were the Parish/School Enhancement and Debt Survey Obligation (SEDSO) Account, Catholic Education Office and Parents’ and Friends Association.

The following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for St Michael’s 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

A VIP—an “Students are Very Important People” Behaviour Management Group have been working with students and staff to assist the whole school community in building a safe and secure environment.

Over the last few years, the staff at St Michael’s have worked on clarifying school rules and using positive language to explain rules. We updated our school “Rainbow Rules” last year to positive language and have been teaching them explicitly to all students. Students are able to name all of the school “Rainbow Rules”. The boundaries, behaviour expectations and specific rules for each playground have been clarified this year, appear in each classroom and have been published regularly in the school newsletter.

Over the last two years we have implemented the Restorative Justice Program (with the support of Marist Youth Care) at our school through a Learning Community Project. This approach to behaviour management focuses on identifying the behaviour and restoring relationships between the people involved. Our current Year 5 and Year 6 students have been trained as peer mentors in the restorative process.

Pastoral Care

As a school we have participated in the following programs:

• “Rock and Water”: where boys are taught control and to focus their energy to gain self control, self reflection and self confidence;
• “Working it out: tools for Everyday Peacemakers”, designed to raise self esteem, develop resilience skills, effective communication and identifying bullying; and
• Peer Support: where Year 6 students would lead a group of multi-age children in activities to build ‘optimism’; and in Kindergarten an interactive social skills program involving role play, literature and activities.

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 our 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
At St Michael’s all aspects of life are valued including the spiritual, physical, aesthetic and intellectual. Teachers follow the NSW Board of Studies Curricula. In 2009 staff focused on scope and sequences for all Key Learning Areas (KLA’s) from Kindergarten to Year 6, aligning outcomes, planning and assessment across each Grade and Stage.

Curriculum & Pedagogy
The school continues to develop learning communities where students, staff and parents are involved. The Diocesan Learning and Teaching Framework was used as a model for improving academic practice in the areas of assessment and reporting.

A wide range of assessment tasks were used throughout the year and teachers closely monitored student learning. Using the Diocesan Learning and Teaching Framework assisted in developing richer assessment procedures. The data from these assessments provide teachers with information that will assist them to make informed judgements about achievements of students and to design more effective learning and teaching programs.

All Australian States and Territories agreed to undertake the first National Assessment Tests for children in years 3 and 5. Students from primary schools through Australia participated in this Nation Assessment Plan for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). The examination was held over three consecutive days May 12-14, 2009 testing spelling, writing and grammar, reading and numeracy.

The Religious Literacy Assessment for Year 4 students consists of two sections: Part A, which is a formal written set of responses and Part B, consisting of presentations using multimedia formats which are based on the completion of individual student work samples.

After redeveloping whole school scope and sequences for both Human Society and Its Environment and Science and Technology, the school purchased new integrated units, which cover all areas of the current Science and Technology syllabus.

Interactive whiteboards, data projectors, laptops, digital videos and still cameras are continuing to be used within the classrooms and are available to every class. The staff held a number of workshops the effective use of interactive whiteboards in the Learning process.

Cross Curriculum
Reading Recovery has continued to be a great support for children with reading and writing needs. In Year One twenty four students completed this Program under the tuition of the two trained teachers. This brings the total number of Reading Recovery trained teachers in our school to seven.
The MULTILIT Program is designed for children who have struggled to learn to read in the first few years of schooling. These children need intensive, systematic reading instruction in the areas of phonics, word attack skills, sight word recognition and supported book reading in a one-on-one context. MULTILIT incorporates all of these. During 2009, 32 students participated in the Program. School Support Officer time was allocated to ensure greater support for students with high needs in the areas of Literacy through the MULTILIT Program. Regular team meetings are held to maintain the integrity of the Program.

This year during National Aborigines and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week, a special flag raising ceremony was held involving community elders, students, parents and staff. The children participated in Aboriginal cultural awareness activities. St Michael’s formed an Indigenous Educational Committee, holding a staff meeting to set a twelve month plan aimed at increasing involvement and consultation with the Indigenous community. New indigenous families were welcomed to the school at a gathered lunch.

**Meeting the needs of all students**

The Learning Centre operates to support students funded under the Commonwealth’s Students with Disability Funding with their English and Mathematics. The students work with the support of a teacher and a school support officer (SSO) on their individual programs which cater for their needs.

Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) are designed for children with special needs at both ends of the spectrum. The class teacher, parents and the Learning Centre teacher hold IEP meetings at the end of each Term to review the progress of these children and set new goals.

The gifted and talented students at St Michael’s are provided with enrichment opportunities in all Key Learning Areas. There are IEPs written for these students where required. The school offers students the opportunity to compete in the University of NSW Australian School competitions and to be involved in a variety of enrichment programs.

The Rock and Water program has been targeting boys in 2009. The focus is on tactics to use in playground and classroom situations.

In sport, students took part in colour house team competitions in swimming, cross-country and athletics at school level. Grades 3 to 6 students participated in gala days for soccer, dragon tag, National Rugby League (NRL), basketball, netball, cricket and Australian Football League AFL. Students in Grades 3 to 6 attended skills development clinics run by representatives of Australian Rugby League and Australian Football League.

St Michael’s students had the opportunity to trial for a variety of sports for selection in Wollongong Diocesan teams and possibly progress to MacKillop and State carnival levels. These are elite athletes in their chosen sports. Two students at St Michael’s this year received a Primary Blue Medallion at the Catholic Development Fund Sports Awards in Wollongong, and a teacher received the Teacher’s Service Award for their contribution to Diocesan sport.
Teachers use myclasses to enhance learning and developing understanding, placing a strong emphasis on technology to showcase student learning. A number of staff meetings and after hour training sessions were organised to help the teaching staff upgrade their skills.

**Expanding Learning Opportunities**

The school competed in the Shoalhaven Eisteddfod with three entries: Infant and Primary Choirs and Verse Speaking, achieving a first and second place. Representatives from Grades 5 and 6 were chosen to compete in Public Speaking at the Catholic Development Fund competitions. As in previous years, students in Grades 3 to 6 were given the opportunity to test their skills and knowledge in the University of NSW Australian School Competitions for Schools English, Writing, Spelling, Mathematics, Computer and Science. Children had the chance to exercise their creative talents in the art competition “The Christmas Story” Exhibition. The Premier’s Reading Challenge was again held with children in Grades K to 6 being encouraged to participate.

In 2009 we have initiated an Environmental Group for children Kinder to Year 6. This is to educate our children and participate in promoting both the environment and climate change. At the ECO Kids Festival as part of the Enrichment Program three students from St Michael’s School presented on behalf of sustainable schools NSW.

**Professional Learning**

During 2009, the Catholic Education Office supported St Michael’s staff in a range of professional learning activities related to improving student outcomes. Kindergarten and Year 1 staff commenced the Working Together to Succeed Project focusing on improving Mathematics outcomes for all students with an emphasis on Indigenous students.

St Michael’s staff participated in five staff development days two of which focused on the use of Interwrite Interactive Whiteboards installed in each classroom in 2009. Numerous staff and committee meetings were devoted to behaviour management, as part of our Learning Communities Project and well supported by CEO staff.

Student Achievement

The school uses a variety of assessment strategies at key points in the learning framework. These include teacher observation, projects and presentations. The school also participates in the National Assessment 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.

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 2009: % in Bands</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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>School 17%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National 15%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>School 14%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National 9%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>School 24%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National 15%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</td>
<td>School 18%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National 15%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>School 23%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National 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 2009: % AT or ABOVE NMS</th>
<th>YEAR 3</th>
<th>YEAR 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spelling</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Numeracy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Parent, Student and Staff Satisfaction**

During 2009 parents, staff and Grades five and six students were surveyed to provide each group the opportunity for input in areas affecting learning and teaching and the general functioning of the school. The information provided by the survey will be used to assist the school with future planning. The responses received were mostly very positive. 31% strongly agreed, 57% agreed, 9% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed to questions within the survey.

Results revealed that all members of the school community agree that St Michael’s help the students develop a knowledge and understanding of the Catholic tradition. Students and parents agreed the school provides a safe and supportive environment.

Results show that teachers are genuinely interested in the student’s welfare but the school needs do to more in regards to providing information about student’s progress. Compulsory parent’s interviews were introduced this year in addition to the option for extra interviews being available by appointment.

**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**
  - 2.5 Pastoral care
- **Key Area 3: Pedagogy**
  - 3.6 School climate, learning environment and relationships
  - 3.5 Assessment
- **Key Area 4: Human Resources Leadership and Management**
  - 4.2 Professional development of staff

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

- **Key Area 1: Catholic Life and Religious Education**
  - 1.1 Vision and Mission
- **Key Area 2: Students and their Learning**
  - 2.5 Pastoral Care
- **Key Area 3: Pedagogy**
  - 3.2 Provision for the Diverse Needs of Learners
- **Key Area 5: Resources, Finance and Facilities**
  - 5.3 Environmental Stewardship
- **Key Area 6: Parents, Partnership, Consultation and Communication**
  - 6.3 Linkages with the wider community
- **Key Area 7: Strategic Leadership and Management**
  - 7.1 Planning for Improvement