About This Report

Stella Maris Catholic Primary School, Shellharbour 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:

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

Parish Priest: Fr Bryan Jones
Principal: Sr Colleen Mills
Date: 11 December 2009
Vision Statement

“Reverence the Story of All People”

Message from Key School Bodies

Principal’s Message
Stella Maris Catholic Primary School has continued to offer children enrolled a quality Catholic Education based on Gospel values underpinned by our Mission and Vision Statement with Core Values. Throughout the year children in Years 3 & 6 have received the Sacraments of Penance, First Holy Communion and Confirmation. Children have attended the weekly Parish Mass, school liturgies and celebrations have been highlights of the year.

On 13 December a farewell and thanksgiving Mass was celebrated by Bishop Peter as the Sisters of Charity departed from Stella Maris Catholic Primary School in their leadership role after 51 years. 2010 will see the appointment of our first lay Principal.

Parents continue to work collaboratively with the teachers thus providing a sound and necessary partnership.

Parent Involvement
Parent involvement is always welcomed. The Parents and Friends Association (P&F) had a late election this year but despite this, the committee ran some very successful events, including the chocolate and pie drives, trivia night, Mothers' and Fathers' Day stalls and the Fun Day.

An amount of $500 was donated to the school for the purchase of new gym mats. A $10,000 donation has recently been made and a decision on how to best spend this will be made early in 2010.

The P&F Executive acting on behalf of the parent body have worked hard this year to maintain the partnership between families and staff, while promoting a strong community spirit.

Parents and Friends Association, Secretary.

Student Leadership
Our role as leaders of Stella Maris Catholic Primary School has been hard work but very rewarding. The Student Council have held an Easter Egg Raffle, as well as a Pink and Yellow Mufti Day, which raised money for Cancer research. We have participated in the ANZAC March, Remembrance Day Service and the burial of the Shellharbour 150th Anniversary Time Capsule. These important roles within the school came with responsibilities including Kindergarten duty, playground signs and setting good examples for younger students.

School Captains

Stella Maris, Shellharbour ASR2009
School Profile

School Context

Stella Maris Catholic Primary School is a Catholic Systemic co-educational school located in Shellharbour. The school caters for students in years K-6 and has a current enrolment of 308.

Stella Maris Catholic Primary School opened in May 1958, with two Sisters of Charity and 46 pupils. As part of the All Saints Parish, Stella Maris Catholic Primary School is a community centred on the person of Christ. We endeavour to build a Christian Community where human knowledge, enlightened and enlivened by faith is shared by the Clergy, teachers, students and parents in the spirit of love and freedom.

Student Enrolments

<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>152</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</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>92.7%</td>
<td>91.0%</td>
<td>89.4%</td>
<td>93.0%</td>
<td>89.1%</td>
<td>91.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regular checks are conducted to ensure that all unexplained absences are followed up with a request for a written explanation from parent/guardian. When a student is absent for more than three consecutive days contact is made with parent/guardian to ascertain reason for absence.

Staffing Profile

There are a total of 19 teachers and 5 support staff at Stella Maris Catholic Primary School. This number includes 15 full-time and 4 part-time teachers.

Teacher Standards

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

The average daily teacher attendance rate for 2009 was 94.90%. This does not include planned leave such as Maternity or Long Service Leave. The teacher retention rate from 2008 to 2009 was 89%.

Professional Learning

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

- School Review & Improvement;
- “Groundworks” Numeracy Conference;
- Catholic Teacher/Librarian Conference;
- Apple Teachnology day;
- Learning for Leadership;
- Catholic Principals Conference; and
- Leading Literacy/ Numeracy Course.

School based expenditure on professional learning in 2009 was $2,810. This is in addition to expenditure on professional learning opportunities provided by the Catholic Education Office.

Catholic Life & Religious Education

Stella Maris Catholic Primary School continues to promote the evangelising mission of the Church. Our vision statement Reverence the story of all people permeates in all aspects of policy, planning and action in the school. The school continues to support parents in their roles as the primary educators in the faith development of their children entrusted to its care. The school is proactive in ensuring the Catholic faith, tradition and culture are authentic and
evident in the school. The Diocesan Religious Education Program is taught across all classes. There are innovative learning and teaching activities, which reflect current pedagogy and meets the learning needs of the students.

The school fosters collaboration with the Priests and Parishes. Class visits by the Parish Priests, and associates (Sister Kerry), strengthens this relationship. There are planned and regular opportunities for the Celebration of the Eucharist with the local parishioners. Special Masses of thanksgiving for the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Holy Communion were celebrated with Nazareth Catholic School.

The school consistently articulates its Charism and history and this receives special recognition on our school Feast Day August 15. This was celebrated with a Parish Mass and a school Liturgy. Children have opportunities to pray as a school through school liturgies and include ANZAC Day, National Aboriginal Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Celebration, Easter, Lent, Mary and Missions. Reflective Prayer continues to be a daily school practice with children experiencing a variety of prayer practices. Rosary bags continue to circulate to families at our school, giving families opportunities to pray the Rosary together. In October, all classes pray the Rosary during Reflective Prayer.

The school is committed to be involved in social outreach programs. This year our children have been actively involved with the local St. Vincent de Paul (SVDP), Warilla RSL Day Care, Shellharbour Care Group, Caritas Australia and Catholic Mission. Our Maths-a-Thon raised over $3,400. This money was used to support charities. A donation of $2,000 was made to Catholic Mission to support a special project that began last year and funded by our school. This project involves the indigenous people in Alice Springs beginning the translation of the Lectionary into their native language. Our school received special recognition from Catholic Mission, Fr Rass (Parish Priest of Alice Springs Parish) and Mrs Leonie Palmer elder from Alice Springs. Further donations included $500 to the Catholic Bishops' Bushfires Appeal, $400 to Catholic Mission Asian Natural Disaster appeal and $1,000 to SVDP Christmas appeal.

The school supports the spiritual development of students and staff. Year 6 had an opportunity to be part of a Reflection Day in preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation. All staff was involved in a Staff spirituality day in Term 3. These days were facilitated by the members of Catholic Life And Religious Education (CLARE) team from the Catholic Education Office.

**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 42 Year 4 students who sat the Religious Literacy Assessment Workbook (Part A) on Monday 7 September 2009, and 48 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 26% of students were placed in the developing level, 70% in the achieving level and 4% were in the extending level.

For Part B 20% of students were placed in the developing level, 55% in the achieving level and 25% were in the extending level.

Combining Parts A and B, 24% of our students were placed in the developing level, 62% in the achieving level and 14% were in the extending level for Religious Literacy.

**Financial Summary**

During the year several major projects have been completed at Stella Maris Catholic School. With the assistance of the Governments National Schools Pride (NSP) Grant of $150,000 we have been able to purchase new tables & chairs for infants classes, cupboards for primary classrooms, tote boxes for classrooms, re-carpet 10 classrooms and 4 bag rooms, lay vinyl in the Special Education room, erect front runners, paint classrooms, erect new retaining walls, create an under building storage room and repair concrete around the canteen.

The P&F had a successful year holding various fundraising activities. Funds raised have enabled the purchase of sporting resources such as a high jump mat for the school.

The following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for Stella Maris 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
The school community exists in a secure and supportive environment. The school’s Vision Statement ‘Reverence the story of all people’ is the core to the development of the school into the caring and nurturing place it is today.

Pastoral Care
The National Safe Schools Framework incorporated in the Safe Schools Policy developed in conjunction with Diocesan Policies continues to be implemented with school evacuation and lockdown procedures practised each term.

The Pastoral Care Committee assists teachers with the identification of pastoral, behavioural and emotional needs of children in their care. Staff have been trained in Restorative Justice principles and use these principles in the management of student behaviour including bullying and harassment. All staff have received training in Anaphylaxis, Asthma and First Aid treatment.

A Catholic Care Counsellor provides counselling and supports the running of social skills programs: ‘Hit the Ground Running’ (Year 6), ‘Pals’ (Kindergarten) and ‘Tools for Everyday Peacemakers’ (Year 4). Kindergarten and Year 6 children participate in Buddies system. The ‘Seasons for Growth’ Program is available for children with specific pastoral needs.

Through the Year 6 Young Leaders Day and the Student Council, student leadership is encouraged. Children’s achievements in a variety of areas are acknowledged at assemblies with a weekly award system in place.

Parents or guardians are informed on their child’s education through Kindergarten orientation days, information nights and parent teacher interviews.

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
Stella Maris Catholic Primary School is a Catholic educational community, which provides a quality learning and teaching environment for all. Classroom practices, strategies and structures aim to enable students to reach their potential. This year, there have been many initiatives designed to create learning opportunities.

Curriculum & Pedagogy
The school implemented all Board of Studies Key Learning Areas, using each syllabus to guide learning and teaching. All classes followed the Diocese of Wollongong Religious Education Syllabus.

In 2009, the school continued to implement the Assessment and Reporting procedures, which complied with Federal Government requirements. Student reports, containing the Common Grade Scale, were completed using Filemaker Pro Database and were sent home in June and November. Parents were offered opportunities to meet with teachers, coinciding with the reports going home. Parents were also encouraged to meet with teachers throughout the year when the need arose.

Teachers designed work programs which followed the Diocesan Programming Policy. A feature of the programs was the high degree of integration across Key Learning Areas (KLAs) which linked to the Stage Outcomes and Foundation Statements.

The school maintained its commitment to promote all aspects of Information Technology. The students were regularly given the opportunity to improve their computer knowledge and skills, whilst completing carefully designed technology tasks. Two pods of computers were available for the use of classes on a rostered basis, as well as desktop computers being regularly used in all classrooms.

Cross Curriculum
The Reading Recovery Program is a literacy intervention program for students experiencing difficulty in the early acquisition of literacy skills. Thirteen Year 1 students were successfully discontinued from the Program this year.

The promotion of literacy learning is part of the school’s vision in education. The 2009 Literacy Plan was implemented throughout the year. This plan involved Catholic Education Office (CEO) personnel supporting the staff in the teaching of Literacy. Numeracy continued to be a major focus for learning and teaching. Teachers implemented the Board of Studies K-6 Mathematics Syllabus, using current teaching techniques and resources, which were updated throughout the year. A strong emphasis was placed on Space and Measurement and problem solving, within planned lessons. Further resources to extend the children’s skills in Numeracy were purchased, with each class receiving a box of resources.
School liturgies were conducted fortnightly which allowed the students to share and
dramatise the religious learning which had been going on in the classroom.

The school continued to follow its Indigenous Education Plan which specifically addressed
ways in which the Diocesan Policy is being implemented. The Acknowledgement of Country
Statement, which recognises the traditional owners of the land where the school is situated,
continued to be a feature of Monday morning school assemblies. Students were also involved
in a NAIDOC Week liturgy and our Indigenous students performed at a class assembly.

Teachers catered for a wide range of student abilities through careful planning and
programming. Opportunities were created which enabled students to take responsibility for
their own learning through using technology to research and complete work.

The school provided a range of experiences outside the classroom including sport, music,
chess and public speaking competitions. These activities afforded talented students the
opportunity to display their competency both at a whole school level and in the public arena.
The school continued to work with other Southern Illawarra Catholic Schools (SICS) to provide
Maths enrichment days for students who needed extension.

Specific student learning needs were addressed in a variety of ways. The Review Committee
continued to provide support for teachers in monitoring students with specific learning needs
in numeracy and literacy. Students received regular assistance from School Support Officers
who, with classroom teachers, planned learning experiences which supported the students
and developed their skills. In 2009, 13 students received specific assistance through funding
provided by the Federal Government and the Catholic Education Office. Teachers monitored
and recorded student progress and parents were kept informed.

Students in all Stages were provided with opportunities to experience self directed learning.
Group work, research projects and properties associated with myclasses in some classes
challenged the students to investigate various topics and to develop a greater understanding
and knowledge of curriculum content.

**Expanding Learning Opportunities**

Students participated in a wide range of competitions. Stages 2 and 3 were given the
opportunity to compete in the Australasian All Schools Competitions in Mathematics and
English with some very good results. Many students entered various competitions including
the Mary MacKillop and Shellharbour City Council 150th Anniversary Art Competitions. The
students participated in a wide range of sporting activities at school, Regional, Diocesan and
MacKillop levels. A highlight of the sporting events this year was the number of teams
participating in the NSW Catholic Primary Schools Basketball Competition, which was hosted
locally. One student came third in a national BMX competition, while another made the State
cricket side.
Students who possessed outstanding individual sporting talents were able to vie for selection through Diocesan Trials, with 10 students being chosen in Wollongong Representative Teams. Throughout the year, various school carnivals were conducted including swimming, cross country and athletics. These events encouraged maximum student participation and developed community spirit.

Stella Maris Primary School conducted a Public Speaking Competition for students in Stage 3. Twenty one students participated, with the winners from each section going on to represent the school in the South East Cluster schools Voice of Youth competition.

Stella Maris joined the other Southern Illawarra Catholic Schools (SICS) in sending 10 students to a two day Landcare Conference. This conference allowed the students to hear about and reflect on environmental issues. The Catholic Education Office along with the schools paid the associated costs for the students.

Professional Learning

This year Numeracy was our school’s professional learning focus. Staff attended a mathematics Conference at Wollongong University focusing on effective Mathematics learning and teaching. Through the use of the Australian Government Partnerships funding staff were supported in their teaching of Mathematics, this funding provided classroom support for teachers in the areas of space and measurement, areas which were highlighted by staff and NAPLAN as sub-strands which needed further development. This support was given in class and as part of staff meetings.

Literacy was another area where professional learning opportunities were provided, with staff being provided with internal and external inservicing, relevant to their individual needs. This included class visits and Staff Meetings being run by specialist CEO personnel.

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’s 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.
Year 3

Literacy results were strong in Year 3, particularly in Writing with 53% of students achieving Band 5 or 6. Numeracy results showed that 53% of students achieved in Bands 3 and 4 with 21% achieving Bands 5 or 6.

Year 5

Literacy results in Year 5 indicated that most students achieved Bands 5 or 6 or above with 46% of students achieving Bands 7 or 8 on average in the four strand areas. Numeracy results showed that 53% of students achieved Bands 5 or 6 with 32% of students achieving bands 7 or 8.

While these results are sound, the school will maintain its focus on improving student outcomes, especially in Mathematics and providing both support and challenges for 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></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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.
### NAPLAN 2009:
**% AT or ABOVE NMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></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>100%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spelling</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Numeracy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Parent, Student and Staff Satisfaction

All families in the school received a parent survey. A total of 204 were issued and 46 were returned completed. The majority of the survey responses for all questions fell in the Strongly Agree and Agree categories especially in relation to our teaching about the Catholic tradition, and the school providing a safe and supportive environment.

90 student surveys were returned from Years 5 & 6 and again the majority of responses were in the Strongly Agree and Agree categories.

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

School Review and Improvement (SRI) 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**
  - 1.1 Vision & Mission

- **Key Area 2: Students and their Learning**
  - 2.5 Pastoral Care

- **Key Area 3: Pedagogy**
  - 3.6 School climate, learning environment and relationships
  - 3.7 Professional Learning

- **Key Area 4: Human Resources Leadership and Management**
  - 4.2 Professional Development of Staff

- **Key Area 5: Resources, Finance and Facilities**
  - 5.4 Financial Management

- **Key Area 6: Parents, Partnership, Consultation and Communication**
  - 6.3 Linkages with the Wider Community

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

- **Key Area 3: Pedagogy**
  - 3.1 Curriculum provision
  - 3.5 Assessment

- **Key Area 4: Human Resources Leadership and Management**
  - 4.4 Succession Planning
  - 4.5 Overall Compliance with Legislation and Other Requirements

- **Key Area 5: Resources, Finance and Facilities**
  - 5.2 Use of Resources and Space

- **Key Area 7: Strategic Leadership and Management**
  - 7.1 Planning for Improvement