About This Report

St Michael’s Catholic Primary School, Thirroul 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
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Thirroul NSW 2515
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Fax: (02) 4268 1482
Email: info@smtdow.catholic.edu.au
Website: www.smtdow.catholic.edu.au

Parish Priest: Father Ken Cafe

Principal: Mrs Louise Campbell
Date: 3 December 2009
Vision Statement

St Michael’s Catholic Primary School is a Catholic school centred on Jesus Christ and is founded on Christian values. Together with the family and the Church the school shares the responsibility of educating each child within a caring Christian community. Each child is seen as a unique being with special talents and needs.

Message from Key School Bodies

Principal’s Message

As Principal of St Michael’s Catholic Primary School Thirroul, I have pleasure in presenting the Annual School Report for the 2009 School Year. The annual report provides an opportunity for the community to reflect on and celebrate the significant achievements that have occurred this year. I take this opportunity to thank all those involved with our school. I acknowledge and thank our dedicated staff for all they have done and continue to do to build and nurture the children’s faith and love of learning. I thank the students who take such pride in their school. I thank the Parish Priest for his positive support of the school. I am most grateful to the many parents who have volunteered their time, talents and treasures to assist in providing the many and varied experiences and opportunities to the students of St Michael’s. I appreciate the commitment of the Parents and Friends Association (P&F) and thank them for their efforts in maintaining and improving the facilities and resources of this our school. I acknowledge the achievements and challenges of the 2009 School Year and look forward in anticipation to another exciting year to come.

Parent Involvement

The P&F has worked in partnership with the school and Parish in order to benefit the students. Our P&F held the Annual General Meeting of the Association in November 2008. The first social function for the new committee was the annual Parish Christmas party which was held in December. It was a success and a great opportunity for the school and parish communities to mix on a social level. The P&F funded two new projects in 2009, a school choir and an indigenous artist. The fete was another huge success raising $26,000. The P&F donated $7,000 towards Key Learning Areas and an additional $2,000 to purchase readers for the Year 1 classroom. The tuckshop has also had a very successful year raising $15,000; $5,800 was donated to the school for the purchase of an interactive board.

Parents and Friends Association, President

Student Leadership

It was an honour to be elected School Captains and Vice Captains in 2009. We have enjoyed representing our school. We have attended many functions such as the Leadership Mass at St Francis Xavier’s Cathedral. We have combined with the school leaders from Thirroul Primary School to lead the ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day ceremonies for both schools and the
local RSL Sub Branch. All Year 6 students have roles of responsibility and we all enjoyed being part of National Young Leaders Day which was held at the Sydney Entertainment Centre. Year 6 students were also trained as Peer Support Leaders and we enjoyed working with our own groups. Year 6 students were also given the opportunity to organise the school discos and other activities for the school.

School Captains

School Profile

St Michael's Catholic Primary School is a Catholic Systemic co-educational school located in Thirroul. The school caters for students in Years K-6 and has a current enrolment of 219 students. The school was established in 1940 by the Sisters of Saint Joseph to serve the needs of the Catholic Community. Although the Sisters left the school the Josephite tradition remains strong.

As a Parish school, St Michael's is an integral part of the Parish and of the wider community. The spiritual growth and welfare of every student, along with sound education practices is paramount, and is a shared responsibility of the Parish Priest, Principal, Staff and Parents under the authority of both Catholic, and Federal and State Government bodies.

The majority of students come from Thirroul, Austinmer and Wombarra and recently there has been an increasing number of students seeking enrolment from suburbs south of Thirroul.

Student Enrolments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2009</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
<th>LBOTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>119</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</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>91.2%</td>
<td>82.2%</td>
<td>89.1%</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
<td>88.5%</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The daily attendance roll is completed by the class teacher and sent to the office for electronic marking. Parents are expected to notify the school in writing of any absence. All notes are filed. Unknown absences are followed up on a regular basis. Print outs from the
School Administration System (SAS) are sent home for the parents to complete and return to school.

**Staffing Profile**

There are a total of 15 teachers and 6 support staff at St Michael’s Catholic Primary School. This number includes 7 full-time and 8 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>Teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised by AEI - NOOSR*</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<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 99.04%. This does not include planned leave such as maternity or long service leave. The teacher retention rate from 2008 to 2009 was 99%.

**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:

- Religious Literacy (1 member);
- Operation Art Department of Education and Training;
- Library training ‘Oliver’ (2 members);
- Anaphylaxis Training Update (whole staff);
- Information Communication Learning Technologies (ICLT) (1 member);
- Diocesan Learning and Teaching Framework (DLTF) (2 members);
- Spirituality (whole staff);
• Lighthouse Technologies (1 member);
• Reading Recovery (2 members);
• Leading Learning and Teaching (4 members);
• Special Education (1 member);
• St Paul’s Conference (1 member);
• Vital Statistics Numeracy (1 member);
• Financial Literacy (1 member);
• Positive School Behaviours (5 members);
• Learning Communities Project - Holy Spirit College (2 members);
• Space and Geometry (whole staff);
• Maths Conference (2 members);
• First Aid and CPR (whole staff);
• Australian Early Development Index (3 members);
• Literacy and Numeracy (2 members);
• Pastoral Care Forum (3 members);
• Technologies 4 Learning (1 member);
• Australian Literacy Educators’ Association (ALEA) (4 members);
• Mathematics;
• NAPLAN;
• Interactive board training; and
• Learning Communities Project - St Michael’s (whole staff).

School based expenditure on professional learning in 2009 was $1575. 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 is an authentic Catholic Parish Primary School. This is evidenced by the close relationship between the Parish Priest Father Ken Cafe, the school community and parishioners.

Religious Education is the focus of the school, is taught daily and is integrated in all aspects of schooling and daily life. The Diocese of Wollongong Religious Education Curriculum is the endorsed curriculum for all grades from Kindergarten to Year 6, in conjunction with St Michael’s Religious Education Policy.

The Year 2009 began with a Welcoming Mass for staff on the first day of the new school year. During Term 1 a Commissioning Mass for all staff and catechists was held. This ceremony acknowledged the valuable work done by the St Michael’s staff and catechists in the Thirroul Parish. The students began the new school year with a Welcoming Mass for Kindergarten students and parents and Presentation of Badges to the 2009 school leaders. A whole school Mass was also celebrated for the Feast of Mary MacKillop.
Students participated in a Liturgy of the Word for Ash Wednesday, for each day of Holy Week, for Catholic Schools Week, for the first anniversary of the Apology to the Stolen Generation and for each week of Advent. Year 6 students participated in ‘Prayer and Conversation with the Bishop’ on 23 September, along with students from six other nearby primary schools.

This year thirty Year 4 students participated in the Diocesan Religious Education Literacy Assessment. Students completed a written examination and also submitted an extended task based on the unit ‘One With God’s Creation’. The results of the written examination were collated by the Australian Catholic University, and combined with the extended task mark then results were sent to parents. St Michael’s Year 4 students produced some outstanding work and achieved very high results. The students’ creative, extended works were exhibited in the school hall for all of the school and parish community to observe.

The school is very conscious of its rich history and the contribution to the Northern Illawarra and the Thirroul Parish by the Sisters of Saint Joseph. The school remembers and celebrates the influence of Blessed Mary MacKillop and acknowledges the work of the Sisters of Saint Joseph in establishing St Michael’s School. On the 8 August this year staff, students, parents and parishioners gathered to celebrate Mass for the Feast of Mary MacKillop.

The Parish Priest is a regular visitor to the school. He visits classrooms, assists in preparing Masses and has positive input into all aspects of Religious Education in the school. The Parish Priest and assisting priest facilitated a staff reflection day for all staff in Term 4 on Franciscan Spirituality.

Sacramental Programs are family based and Parish, school and parents work together to prepare children for the Sacraments of Penance, First Eucharist and Confirmation. Father Cafe, Class Teachers and the Religious Education Co-ordinator prepare an innovative program for each Sacrament. Children from the school and parish attend classes after school on the weeks leading up to the Sacrament that they are preparing to receive. This year, Year 3 students received the Sacrament of First Eucharist in March, Year 6 the Sacrament of Confirmation in August and then Year 2 students received the Sacraments of Penance for the first time in September and First Eucharist in November.

All staff members are dedicated to providing a quality Catholic Education whilst acknowledging the need to work closely with families and Church. The collaborative, collegial approach to all aspects of school life ensures all members of the school community have the opportunity to contribute to direction and decision-making. The whole school community models Catholic values by their support and involvement in special fundraising activities including Project Compassion, Mission Week, Jeans for Genes Day, MS Readathon, St Vincent de Paul, Pink Ribbon Day and Boardies Day. At all school Masses food items are collected for the local St Vincent de Paul Society to distribute to the needy.
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 30 Year 4 students who sat the Religious Literacy Assessment Workbook (Part A) on 7 September and 30 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. Part A consisted of 30 multiple choice/restricted answer and short answer/performance questions which reflect Stage 1 and 2 outcomes and content in RE. Students performed extremely well in Part A with 75% - 100% of students choosing the correct response in 23 out of 30 questions.

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 symbols, signs and rituals in the Catholic tradition;
- Celebration of the Eucharist;
- Relating to others;
- Knowledge of Mary;
- Prayer; and
- Knowledge of the Commandments.

The students’ responses showed a need for them to develop their capacity to work with and apply the religious tradition especially in their ability to:

- Demonstrate an awareness of ways Jesus is present in the Eucharist.

Part B, the Extended Task consisted of one main task with four components, the focus derived from the Year 4 unit *One With God’s Creation*. Students planned, drafted and put considerable time and effort into their project. Students found this task to be a very valuable and challenging learning experience. Students were enthusiastic and produced some excellent products including art works, IT presentations, storybooks, posters, songs and models.

For Part A 0% of students were placed in the developing level, 70% in the achieving level and 30% were in the extending level.

For Part B 0% of students were placed in the developing level, 67% in the achieving level and 33% were in the extending level.

Combining Parts A and B, 0% of students were placed in the developing level, 77% in the achieving level and 23% were in the extending level for Religious Literacy.
Financial Summary

During 2009 the Parents & Friends Association donated $9,000 for Key Learning Area resources and $2,250 towards the cost of a resident Indigenous Artist. The Parents & Friends also funded the services of a trained choir teacher. The Tuckshop Committee donated $5,800 towards the purchase and installation of an Interactive Board.

An amount of $17,000 has been set aside to pay for three interactive boards that have been ordered for the beginning of the 2010 School Year. While $6,000 has been earmarked for the installation of a new phone system and $18,000 has been set aside for the purchase of furniture for the new staff room, meeting room and administration area.

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

Student welfare encompasses the wellbeing of the whole child; spiritual, physical, academic, social and emotional and St Michael’s Catholic Primary School is committed to creating a safe and supportive environment for students.

All Year 6 students are given responsibilities within the school. In Term 1 they attended the National Young Leaders Day at the Sydney Entertainment Centre. The day focused on giving the students the opportunity to listen to inspiring high profile people speaking about goal setting and leadership.

The Year 6 students are assigned a Kindergarten student as a buddy. The Buddy system provides guidance, friendship and support for students. It has been particularly useful in helping Kindergarten students settle into school routine, as well as promoting a sense of responsibility in the older students.

In Term 2, the Year 6 students undertook an intensive two day training course of Peer Support. The focus in 2009 was ‘Promoting Harmony’. All Year 6 students led weekly Peer Support lessons for the students in all grades from Kindergarten to Year 5.

The Transition to School program was conducted in Term 4 for students entering Kindergarten in 2010. Twenty seven children completed the four week readiness program ‘Transition to Big School’.

A CatholicCare Counsellor attended the school for 1.5 days a fortnight. Appointments with the Counsellor ensured that students with difficulties were supported. The Counsellor supported staff in addressing welfare issues. The Counsellor facilitated a Roller Coaster program for targeted primary students. The program supported students dealing with family breakdown. The social skills program PALS was also completed by both Kindergarten classes.

Students’ achievements are acknowledged in the school newsletter and at assemblies. An Awards Assembly is held each Friday to celebrate individual student success. All students have the opportunity to earn a range of awards from Superstar Awards through to a St Michael’s Blue. Parents are welcome at assemblies to support the students. These assemblies are an opportunity for parents, staff and students to recognise the achievements of their peers.

In 2009 St Michael’s School continued the School-Wide Positive Behaviours for Learning (SPB4L) Program for the second year. An SPB4L team, consisting of staff members, parent representative and CEO Education Officer for Pastoral Care continued to monitor the progress made by students. The team also looked at data that had been collected on behaviours and then made recommendations to make further improvements. The main characteristics of this program are: a proactive school wide approach for defining, teaching and supporting
appropriate behaviours, the creation of a positive school environment; a focus on the use of a continuum of behaviour supports; an emphasis on the use of assessment information to guide intervention and management decisions; the creation of and then sustaining school wide, classroom and individual systems of support to improve school life and results for learners. School and classroom rules have been grouped under the following headings: Take Care of Yourself, Take Care of Each Other and Take Care of this Place.

The school participates in the ‘Active After School Communities Program’. Staff members have been employed to organise games for students in all grades to enjoy. The children come together on Monday and Wednesday afternoons from 3:30pm until 4:30pm. The students are given afternoon tea before they commence the activities.

In 2009 an educational representative from the Australian Commission and Media Authority, the body who oversees NETALERT, spoke to parents on the dangers of the internet and how to protect children from cyber predators. Stage 3 students received training in safe use of the internet. Year 6 students also participated in ‘Cyber Smart Detectives’ an on-line simulation game developed by the Australian Government. This game took a pro-active approach in teaching students how to be cyber smart.

OH&S inspections are completed regularly and evacuation and lock down procedures are practised each term.

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

In compliance with the NSW Reform Act 1990, Corporal Punishment is banned in ALL schools within the Diocese of Wollongong.

Access to all policies and guidelines can be obtained by contacting the school office.

**Pastoral Care**

In terms of pastoral care this year has seen further development of the SPB$L program; an initiative which began in late 2007. During 2009 data was collected on playground behaviours. As a result of the data, areas of need were highlighted and specifically taught behaviours have been put in place. This has improved lunch time, areas of quiet around classrooms, dismissal and arrival to classrooms. At all times reference was made to the basic values of ‘Take Care of Yourself’, Take Care of Each Other’ and ‘Take Care of this Place’ so that the students, staff and school community could see the correlation between the rules and behaviours. Next year the hope is to use data gathered from the classroom to target areas of concern.

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

In compliance with the NSW Reform Act 1990, Corporal Punishment is banned in all schools within the Diocese of Wollongong.

Access to all policies and guidelines can be obtained by contacting the school office.

Learning and Teaching

Introduction

St Michael’s Thirroul is a learning community where each person is valued and encouraged to do their best. Staff members are committed to providing child-centred learning in which the needs of all students are met. The school continues to use the value systems of ‘Take Care of Yourself’, ‘Take Care of Each Other’ and ‘Take Care of This Place’ to underpin all that is done at St Michael’s. St Michael’s Thirroul was fortunate to be a pilot school for the School Positive Behaviours for Learning (SPB4L) which is based on these values.

The focus areas in learning and teaching for 2009 reflected the Diocesan, State and Federal priorities of improving Religious Education, Literacy and Numeracy outcomes for the students.

St Michael’s linked their teaching and learning with Diocesan Learning & Teaching Framework (DTLF) and School Review and Improvement (SRI). Staff at all times focused their teaching strategies to ensure that the learning needs of all students were addressed. The School’s Numeracy, Literacy, Information Communication Learning Technology (ICLT) Plans have been revised and updated providing frameworks for implementing best practice in all Key Learning Areas.

Curriculum & Pedagogy

The Board of Studies requirements in all Key Learning Areas (KLAs) along with Diocese of Wollongong’s Religious Education Curriculum, underpin the development of the school’s curriculum. The KLAs are implemented across all four stages of learning with special support in Physical Education and ICLT.

Staff this year have worked together to improve and enrich the learning and teaching in the areas of Numeracy. An Education Officer from the Catholic Education Office facilitated the introduction of modules for the Space and Geometry strand across the school. The school with the assistance of the Learning Communities Project “The ABC’s of the 123’s”, supported stage based workshops on problem-solving, NAPLAN, revisiting the Maths Block now known
as Effective Maths Session (EMS), a Maths Project (real life Maths that will be the Government Building Project in 2010 at the school). Throughout the 2009 School Year the school has kept a focus on the most efficient and effective way to meet student, staff and parent needs in the community in regard to the area of Learning Technologies. Part of this focus placed an emphasis on student safety when using the internet. Year 6 students participated in the Cyber Detectives online simulation game developed by the Australian Government. All primary classes were also trained in cybersafety.

During 2009 the school purchased 19 computers and 4 interactive boards. This has provided each classroom with a pod of computers, the infant classes have desktop machines and middle/upper primary have laptops. This year a priority was staff development which involved:

- Weekly technology sessions for staff. These sessions are supported by a technology blog (techtools4learning.edublogs.org/),
- In-class mentoring,
- Cybersafety, and
- Interactive board training.

Of the ICLT budget for 2010, 50% was allocated to teacher professional development.

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.

The children in Year 3 and Year 5 completed the National Assessment Plan for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests. The school results were very pleasing. Children in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 were also given the opportunity to participate in the University of New South Wales Mathematics, Computer and Science Tests. The children in Year 4 also participated in the Wollongong Diocese Religious Literacy Assessment, achieving excellent results. This year, Year 6 students were also a pilot school in the National Assessment Program, Science Literacy (NAPSL). This year 145 students participated in the Premier’s Reading Challenge with 15 students gaining a Gold Award for successfully participating in the Premier’s Reading Challenge for four years.

Cross Curriculum

In Literacy the school continues again to set excellent foundations in all grades. This was supported by the purchase of reading materials and comprehension boxes. The Reading Recovery program catered for 12 students, and currently there are three trained Reading Recovery teachers at St Michael’s.
Numeracy is an ongoing priority at St Michael’s. Teaching staff were afforded valuable professional learning opportunities. An Education Officer from the Catholic Education Office facilitated the introduction of modules of learning for the Space and Geometry strand across the school. The school executive with the assistance of the Learning Communities Project “The ABC’s of the 123’s”, led stage based workshops on problem-solving, NAPLAN, a Maths Project which incorporated the Maths that will be used in the new Government Building Project in 2010 at the school, and revisiting the Maths Block now known as Effective Maths Session (EMS).

Within each KLA, Literacy and Numeracy skills are embedded in learning programs and skills which are taught in a variety of contexts.

Meeting the needs of all students

Special Education

Individual Education Plans (IEPs) were developed using the Diocesan planning tool for students who receive additional funding to support their learning. Regular meetings were held with parents to inform and discuss progress.

The class teachers, in conjunction with the School Support Officers, provided 1-1 and small group assistance as needed. The School Review Committee met to communicate with, and support teachers, of students who were experiencing difficulties accessing the curriculum. The meetings provided the staff with a range of strategies to support those learners in their classrooms. In 2009 the school had the opportunity to provide additional support through a resource teacher to assist students in each class. The teacher was able to provide support in small group situations every Thursday in the areas of Literacy and Numeracy.

Gifted and Talented

This year the school allocated a half day for Gifted and Talented. Groups of students from Stage 2 and 3 were supported by 2 teachers who in small groups addressed “Packaging” - (designing and market research) and a Science experiment on the environment (local area) – tides, phases of the moon and seasons.

The Mathematics Challenge enrichment program was introduced for Year 6 and gave talented students in this area, the opportunity to further extend themselves by working both individually and within a team to complete six Mathematical investigation tasks over a three week period.

Students from Year 3 to Year 6 sat for the University of NSW tests in Maths, English, Computers, Science and Spelling. In Science Week students were able to showcase their talents in front of the school community showcasing experiments and discoveries.
**Reading Recovery**

St Michael’s was fortunate to have three qualified Reading Recovery teachers this year with another returning next year. Twelve children were on the Reading Recovery Program this year. All twelve students were discontinued. Reading Recovery covered 42% of the Year 1 cohort.

**Expanding Learning Opportunities**

**Public Speaking**

St Michael’s holds an annual Public Speaking Competition involving all students from Kindergarten to Year 6. This provided a wonderful opportunity for the students to display their talent in this area. Two students were selected to represent the school at the Public Speaking Competition for the Wollongong Diocese and were successful in gaining First Place (Year 6) and Third Place (Year 5).

**Sport**

Students participated in school, Regional, Diocesan and MacKillop sports carnivals in swimming, athletics and cross-country. Stage 2 and Stage 3 students also participated in Sport Gala Days including soccer, rugby league, cricket, basketball and netball. A number of students competed in Diocesan Selection Trials (cricket, hockey, basketball, rugby league). Other sporting events students participated in included:
- NSW Mark Taylor Shield Cricket Competition;
- Paul McGregor and Rod Wishart Rugby League Shield; and
- Coaching clinics run by local sporting organisations - bowls, tennis and dancing.

Two St Michael’s students were successful in achieving a Sports Award at the Diocesan Sports Presentation.

**Learning Communities Project (between Holy Spirit College and the feeder schools)**

The purpose of the project was to raise the profile of Mathematics. This project has involved developing quality pretests, learning experiences and post tests in areas of common weakness in the Diocese. The tracking of students through NAPLAN results was also a feature of the project. A professional development opportunity for teachers was organised which involved a one day workshop on Mathematics and two combined school staff meetings. This project has been highly successful in building relationships between the different schools and highlighting the importance of assessment.

**Excursions**

Many excursions were made available to the students with trips to Canberra, Symbio, tours of the local community, Sydney transport and National Parks. Year 6 students attended National Young Leaders Day at the Sydney Entertainment Centre.
Creative and Practical Arts

In 2009 St Michael’s was privileged to experience an aboriginal artist at work in the school. This distinguished artist came to the school for two weeks in Term 4 and ran workshops with all classes in painting. Each student was encouraged to paint their own canvas using the techniques taught to them during the workshops. The artist also created two culturally significant artworks with the help of the St Michael’s students. These will be displayed in the school's new buildings.

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.

Thirty Year 3 students and twenty-nine Year 5 students sat the NAPLAN test in 2009. The students at St Michael’s Thirroul achieved a significantly high level of results in all components of NAPLAN tests. In Year 3, 100% of students achieved at or above the National Minimum Standard in Literacy and Numeracy. Year 3 students achieved results considerably higher than the National Average in Bands 5 and 6 in both Literacy and Numeracy. All of Year 5 students achieved above the National Minimum Standard with results in Bands 7 and 8 significantly higher than the National Average in all strands of Literacy and Numeracy.

When NAPLAN results were released all parents were given the opportunity to discuss their child’s results with the class teacher. All staff members were presented with the school’s NAPLAN data at a staff meeting during Term 4. Numeracy results were analysed at a Staff Development Day focusing on mathematics in Term 3. All results were discussed and a plan for 2010 was instigated, targeting students in lower bands who need intervention and support, and also extending those students in higher bands.

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>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>26%</td>
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<tr>
<td>National</td>
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<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
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<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spelling</strong></td>
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<td>School</td>
<td>3%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>23%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Numeracy</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
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</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.
Parent, Student and Staff Satisfaction

At the end of the 2009 school year parents, students and staff were asked to complete an anonymous survey to indicate the level of satisfaction they had for the school. This survey is a way for the school to gauge how well they achieved their goals for the year and it also gives important feedback to assist with planning for the future.

Summary of Parent Satisfaction Findings

An overwhelming strength was highlighted in that all parents agreed that the school helps students to develop a knowledge and understanding about their Catholic tradition. All the parents that responded to the survey agreed that the school provides a safe and supportive environment and the school effectively communicates information about activities and events. Almost all parents consider that staff members are genuinely interested in the welfare of students. One area parents believe needs addressing is that the school needs to cater for more individual learning needs, as a small percentage of parents would like their children challenged more.

Summary of Student Satisfaction Findings

Students from Years 4, 5 and 6 were surveyed and it was satisfying to note that there was an overwhelming response of agreement for what the school is achieving. There were seven questions asked, ranging from their pride in the school, understanding their rights and responsibilities and being encouraged to do their best. Students responded positively in all areas with a small group requesting more sporting activities to be provided at the school. Ninety five percent of students agreed that if they had a problem, there were people at school they could approach for assistance.

Summary of Staff Satisfaction Findings

All staff surveyed agreed that the school helps students to develop a knowledge and understanding about Catholic tradition. Staff believed that the school provides a safe and supportive environment to all community members and that the students are challenged to meet their full potential.

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
  - 2.2 Rights and Responsibilities
  - 2.5 Pastoral Care
- Key Area 3: Pedagogy
  - 3.1 Curriculum Provision
- Key Area 4: Human Resources Leadership and Management
  - 4.2 Professional Development of Staff
- Key Area 5: Resources, Finance and Facilities
  - 5.1 ICT Resources

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

- Key Area 1: Catholic Life and Religious Education
  - 1.3 Catholic Life and Culture
- Key Area 2: Students and their Learning
  - 2.2 Rights and Responsibilities
  - 2.4 Integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
- Key Area 3: Pedagogy
  - 3.2 Provision for the Diverse Needs of Learners
- Key Area 4: Human Resources, Finance and Facilities
  - 4.5 Overall Compliance with Legislation and Other Requirements
- Key Area 5: Resources, Finance and Facilities
  - 5.2 Use of Resources and Space