St Thomas More
Catholic Primary School
Ruse

Annual School Report
2010
About This Report

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

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

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 2011.

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

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Bradbury NSW 2560
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Fax: (02) 4626 7434
Email: info@stmdow.catholic.edu.au
Website: www.stmdow.catholic.edu.au

Parish Priest: Fr Tony Daly
Principal: Mr Don Spencer
Date: 17 December 2010
Vision Statement

In the spirit of truth and love the vision at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School is to be a welcoming community committed to upholding the dignity of the individual where quality learning and teaching is inspired by the message and life of Jesus.

Message from Key School Bodies

Principal’s Message

As Principal of St Thomas More Catholic Primary School Ruse it is with pleasure that I present the Annual School Report for the 2010 School Year.

The 2010 School Year has been one of excitement and one filled with anticipation as the school community watched the construction of the new school hall. Through the Building Education Revolution funding, the St Thomas More community has gained a most valuable resource, which will be a tremendous asset to the learning and teaching for many years to come.

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School underwent a Diocesan Cyclic Review. The review and recommendations proved a rewarding and affirming experience for the school community.

The Annual School Report provides an opportunity for the community to reflect on and celebrate the significant achievements that have occurred this year. I acknowledge and thank the students, staff, pastor, parents, parish and wider community for the way they have contributed to the effective operation and development of this Catholic learning organisation.

Parent Involvement

The 2010 Parents & Friends (P & F) Committee had a very successful year with many events organised for the benefit of the school. Several BBQs, working bees, discos and a movie fundraising night were held and the Annual Fete was a tremendous success. Special thanks must go to the Fete Committee. The Mothers’ Club had another good year also, organising the Easter raffle, fundraising stalls and chocolate drives. Sincere thanks are extended to everyone in the Mothers’ Club. As usual all funds raised were put to equipping and maintaining the school with the majority of this year’s fundraising going towards the purchase of six SMARTboards. The 2010 P&F Committee and all parents who played a role in this year's excellent result are to be congratulated.

Parents and Friends Association, President

Student Leadership

During 2010, Year 6 students had the opportunity to be leaders of the school. The children participated in many events, which included being involved in peer support. This program gave all students in Year 6 a chance to become responsible leaders and teachers. The theme was friendship, which meant the leaders needed to explain to all of the students what a good
friend is and how they can each be a good friend. Every morning, two Year 6 leaders would stand at the front of the school and lead everyone in the Morning Prayer. On Monday mornings the captains would assist the Principal in handing out merit awards to students. As part of leadership in Year 6, the children formed teams, including the student newsletter team, the RE team, the environment team and many others. The teams would make schedules and have meeting days so that programs could be organised. These teams gave Year 6 an opportunity to understand how leaders act and what their responsibilities are. The school captains attended many liturgies and ceremonies and represented the school at different places. One of the most important ceremonies attended was the ANZAC day service. The captains participated in the event to pay respect to those who fought and died in the wars. The Year 6 student leaders wish the St Thomas More community the best of luck for the years ahead.

School Captains

School Profile

School Context

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School is a two stream Kindergarten to Year 6 systemic school, which is under the direction of the Catholic Education Office Wollongong. St Thomas More has benefited from a tradition enriched by the Sisters of the Good Samaritan as well as the Marist Brothers due to Principals and staff who have led and staffed the school in the past. The school endeavours to cater for the spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, behavioural and physical education of all students. St Thomas More Catholic Primary School has fourteen mixed ability classes and a Learning Centre, which supports the needs of students with an identified learning disability. As a Parish School, it is intended that the spiritual growth and welfare of the students be carefully integrated within a needs-based education, which is a shared responsibility of the Parish Priest, Principal, Staff and Parents.

St Thomas More is a school which promotes Stewardship by valuing, respecting and encouraging the unique gifts of every person. The school places a strong emphasis on building resilience in children and operates successful Peer Support and Buddy programs. St Thomas More Catholic Primary School is committed to the creation of contemporary and future-oriented learning programs where educational excellence is encouraged, by providing a relevant, stimulating and challenging curriculum that incorporates the use of technology. The students are able to access laptops, online resources and State-of-the-art interactive whiteboard technology which supplement and enhance innovative teaching and learning programs. Students are given many opportunities: academic, sporting, religious and cultural, to discover and make the most of their talents and they regularly participate in Diocesan and local community events. St Thomas More is a school where students, staff, parents and pastor work and celebrate together in a spirit of true partnership.
Student Enrolments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2010</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
<th>LBOTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>195</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Diocesan Enrolment Policy and Procedures exists 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 both the school website www.stmdow.catholic.edu.au and the Catholic Education Office website: www.dow.catholic.edu.au. No changes were made to this Diocesan Policy in 2010.

Student Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2010</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>91.0%</td>
<td>91.4%</td>
<td>94.2%</td>
<td>87.4%</td>
<td>92.2%</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
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</table>

Management of Student Non Attendance

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

Staffing Profile

There are a total of 22 teachers and 9 support staff at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School. This number includes 17 full-time and 5 part-time teachers.

Teacher Standards

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

<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 2010 was 96.08%. This does not include planned leave such as maternity or long service leave. The teacher retention rate from 2009 to 2010 was 92%.

Professional Learning

Professional learning opportunities are highly valued and sought by all members of St Thomas More Catholic Primary School staff. During 2010 St Thomas More Catholic Primary School personnel undertook a range of professional learning activities related to improving student outcomes.

These included:
- St Thomas More Catholic Primary school whole school staff development days which, focussed on classroom management and procedures for a positive classroom climate; numeracy; and vocational spirituality.

Other professional learning activities provided at school level including CEO run courses:
- Developing an understanding of and improving classroom practices in components of the Literacy Block with emphasis on critical literacy, writing and phonemic awareness;
- Leading Numeracy;
- Staff Spiritual Formation;
- Anaphylaxis training;
- School Accounting System training;
- School Wide Positive Behaviours Project;
- Bethsaida Spiritual Retreat;
- Artist Retreat;
- Men’s Spirituality;
- Grief and Loss Retreat;
- Assistant Principal Retreat;
- Principal’s Retreat;
- Religious Education – Igniting the Fire;
- Masters in Religious Education;
- Certificate of Religious Education;
- Smart Board Technology;
- Diocesan Learning and Teaching Framework;
- Autism Strategies;
- Positive Partnership;
- Special Needs Transition;
- Lane Clark – Thinking and Learning;
- David Langford- Quality Learning;
- Human Sexuality;
- Peer Support Training;
- Seasons for Growth Companion Training;
School based expenditure on professional learning in 2010 was $9464. This is in addition to expenditure on professional learning opportunities provided by the Catholic Education Office.

Catholic Life and Religious Education

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School seeks to promote its own Catholic Identity and the traditions of the Catholic Church. This is done through ensuring that there is a visibility throughout the school of symbols of the Catholic Faith and most importantly, through the provision of quality prayer experiences and liturgical celebrations for all within the community. The School continues to develop a strong relationship with the Parish community. The Parish Priest is very active in the school community, visiting each class at least once a term, administering the Sacrament of Penance to Years 3-6 children and celebrating whole school Masses at school. In addition, each term all students travelled by bus to the Parish Church to celebrate Mass with the Parish community. Families and parishioners were also invited to these celebrations.

The concept of 'Stewardship – a way of life' is continuing to be entrenched into the St Thomas More community. The children participated in ‘Stewardship Week’ in which Morning Prayer and Religious Education lessons focused on the concept of Stewardship. In 2010, Stewardship Week was held in conjunction with Catholic School's Week to further enhance core traditions of Catholic Education and the sharing of Gospel values with the community. St Thomas More has a Stewardship Team, whose members are drawn from every class in the school. Their role is to promote social justice issues and assist with fundraising in the school, especially linking with St Vincent de Paul and Catholic Mission campaigns. Stewardship Awards were presented to students where they acknowledged students for the use of their time, talents and treasures- the fundamental principles of the Stewardship Program.

A community highlight for 2010 was the Stations of the Cross held at Maryfields. The St Thomas More Catholic Primary School community was privileged to participate in the presentation of the Stations of the Cross to the general public during Lent. The community attending were very impressed with the reverence and preparation displayed by the students.

The Canonisation of Mary of the Cross was highlighted through a number of events. In September, Year 6 students and teachers visited Mary MacKillop Place to learn about Mary MacKillop. Another community event was the Diocesan Mass celebrating the Canonisation of Mary of the Cross. Members of the school and parish community attended the celebration, which was held at the Wollongong Entertainment Centre.
Prayer is an integral part of St Thomas More school life. Each day begins with school prayer said during the morning assembly. A prayer focus is evident in class Religious Education lessons. Many memorable liturgies were celebrated during 2010 such as Ash Wednesday and Holy Week liturgies, feast day celebrations such as the Feasts of St Thomas More and Blessed Mary MacKillop, the canonisation of Saint Mary of the Cross, student and staff prayer and Reconciliation.

In 2010 the students were involved in Social Justice Initiatives including fundraising activities for St Vincent de Paul, Caritas-Mission Week, Project Compassion, Appeal for Chile and the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. Approximately $2000 was donated to these worthy causes as well as the many food hampers and Christmas presents donated by the students for the St Vincent de Paul Winter and Christmas Appeals.

**Religious Literacy Assessment**

The Religious Literacy Assessment Program for Year 4 students was successfully implemented within schools across the Diocese in 2010. In 2010 the school cohort consisted of 44 Year 4 students who sat the Religious Literacy Assessment Workbook (Part A) on 30 August 2010 and 44 completed the Extended Task (Part B). The Extended Task is based on the Unit: *One With God’s Creation* and was completed during the first half of Term 3.

The performance of each student was described as developing, achieving or extending. Students showed a high level of performance in their knowledge of the religious tradition. This high level of performance was particularly noticeable in students:

- Knowledge of Jesus and His teachings;
- Knowledge of the commandments; and,
- Identifying key symbols, signs and rituals of the Catholic Tradition.

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

- Sequence events in the Liturgical year; and,
- Recognition of some parables.

For Part A, 25.6% of students were placed in the developing level, 65.1% in the achieving level and 9.3% were in the extending level.

For Part B, 0% of students were placed in the developing level, 44.4% in the achieving level and 55.6% were in the extending level.

Combining Parts A and B, 9.3% of students were placed in the developing level, 62.8% in the achieving level and 27.9% were in the extending level for Religious Literacy.

**Financial Summary**

Financial administration and management procedures at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School are well documented, communicated and working well in practice. Budgets and financial records are set and managed by the School Leadership Team and Senior School Support Officer. Effective liaison with the Administrative Services Team at the Catholic Education Office is maintained.
During 2010 normal school running costs were incurred. In addition, the St Thomas More Catholic Primary School underwent its annual building maintenance program, which was funded by the Parish School Enhancement Debt Servicing Obligation (SEDSO) fund. The cost of this program was $19,829. The parish SEDSO fund also funded other major works such as repairing of roofs ($2,500), removal of trees ($1,870), laying of new carpet in the hallway of the Stage 3 Block ($7,554) and the repair of the security alarm system ($1,100).

During 2010 the school received funds through the Federal Government’s Building Education Revolution Funds to the sum of $2,500,000. The funds were used to build a multi purpose hall, to refurbish an existing room into a staffroom and to create additional office areas in the administration block. St Thomas More Catholic Primary School would like to thank and acknowledge the support of the Australian Federal Government.

The Parents & Friends Association and Mothers’ Club were also generous with their support throughout 2010. The funds provided by these two school community groups were used to purchase interactive whiteboards, computers, reading materials, sporting ribbons and provide hospitality for the school community at several school functions held throughout the year.

The balance carried forward represents outstanding accounts and orders for the beginning of the 2011 School Year. Significant accounts being for additional finances to upgrade the lower basketball court, the completion of landscaping projects and the final payments for the smart boards and associated refurbishments to classrooms and classroom furniture.

The following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for St Thomas More Catholic Primary School for the year ended 31 December 2010. This data is taken from the 2009 financial return to the Australian Government, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.
Student Welfare

Introduction

Catholic Schools are based on the dignity of the whole person and provide witness to Gospel Values as a means to living out daily life. St Thomas More strives to be a place of belonging where all are treated with dignity and respect. These values are captured in the Diocesan and School’s Pastoral Care Policy.

Pastoral Care

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School continued to provide valuable support to all members of the school community. Members of the school strived to promote positive relationships amongst all members of the community, especially the students. Throughout the year children were encouraged to do the best they could. Their achievements continued to be recognised through a series of awards such as weekly individual awards, the Student of the Week Award and the opportunity to have morning tea with the Principal. As a response to the School Wide Positive Behaviour for Learning Project (SPB4L), recognition for exemplary behaviour on the playground was also given to the children in the form of achievement cards, canteen rewards and certificates. Stewardship Awards were also given to children in recognition of them using their time, talents and treasure.

The children once again participated in the Peer Support Program. The Year 6 children facilitated the weekly sessions which, during Term 3 2010, focused on the program ‘Building Connections’. The ‘Better Buddy Bears’ program was also introduced. The program involving the Year 5 and Kindergarten children is designed to promote friendly and caring schools.

After many weeks without a school counsellor, a CatholicCare counsellor was assigned and began work in Term 4. The counsellor provided support on three days per fortnight to children and families. St Thomas More ‘Kid’s Club’ once again continued to be well attended. The aim of the program is to create a fair, co-operative and fun lunchtime setting where all children are treated with respect and dignity. A Seasons For Growth Program was provided for children identified as suffering loss due to a death or separation in their family. The Diocesan SPB4L Program, now in its second year at St Thomas More, continued to take on a significant role in the school. The focus for 2010 was to reinforce and embed in the school culture, consistent routines and behaviours in outside of classroom settings.

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Wollongong are committed to a safe and supportive environment. The principles, guidelines and procedures set out in the Policy documents *Maintaining Right Relationships* and *Safe Work Environment* are the framework for school leaders, students, staff, parents and the wider community to develop a safe and supportive environment. The Diocesan *Complaints Handling Procedures* forms an important element in the Diocese’s commitment to ensuring safe and supportive environments for school communities. These documents can be found on the Catholic Education Office website: www.dow.catholic.edu.au. No changes were made to these Diocesan documents in 2010.

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

Introduction

At St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, all Board of Studies requirements are being met as the school strives to implement a contemporary curriculum to meet the needs of all students. In addition to the Key Learning Areas prescribed by the Board of studies, the students have been provided with courses in Religious Education in accordance with Diocesan Policy. The Diocesan School and Improvement process again provided a focus for initiatives in learning and teaching in 2010. The components reviewed in 2010 included Rights and Responsibilities, Provision for the Diverse Needs of Learners, Pedagogy and Linkages with the Wider Community. These components also reflected the Diocesan imperatives of numeracy and Information Communication Technologies.

Curriculum & Pedagogy

During 2010 assessment data was used from the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) to give a focus and guide the learning and teaching experiences of the teachers. The results of NAPLAN were analysed and discussed, then targets and strategies in literacy and numeracy were developed and implemented. A submission for a Diocesan Learning Communities Project titled ‘Number Sense and Sense-Ability’ was granted and implemented. The project complemented the identified focus in numeracy for 2010. The project assisted in developing in the staff, a deep knowledge and understanding in regard to the skills and strategies involved in mathematical problem solving. The initial focus allowed for school wide planning and implementation of sessions involving the deconstruction of mathematical problems. The development of consistent mathematical language and conceptual knowledge and understandings among staff, together with the employing of consistent procedures and routines, assisted to embed effective Mathematics/numeracy sessions into the classroom practice in all grades.

At St Thomas More the importance of learning technology as an effective tool for learning and teaching is appreciated. All children and staff have access to laptop technology and the multi media trolleys in each stage allows for the use of digital cameras, video cameras and data projectors which enhance the presentation and delivery of class work. The introduction of SMARTboard technology in Stage 3 classrooms also enhanced the quality-learning environment. The ‘myclasses’ portal was used by staff and children to assist in developing a deeper understanding of the Diocesan Learning and Teaching Framework (DLTF).

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 were undertaken: written, oral, performance and observation. A number of assessment tasks combine to provide teachers and students with a clear picture of progress which was communicated to parents using the Federal Government mandated A-E reporting system and
three way Parent/Teacher/Student conferences. The children in Year 3 and Year 5 completed the NAPLAN tests. Children in Year 4, 5 and 6 were also given the opportunity to participate in the University of New South Wales, Mathematics, English, Computer and Science Tests. The children in Year 4 also participated in the Wollongong Diocese Religious Literacy Assessment.

**Cross Curriculum**

Literacy once again had a strong focus at St Thomas More. The consistent efforts of Stage 3 and Early Stage 1/Stage 1 staff in implementing buddy reading episodes, has enhanced the reading development and love of reading. All students were given the opportunity to participate in the 2010 Premier’s Reading Challenge, which also assisted in promoting the love of literature. In all, forty-five children completed the challenge in the required time allocation and three children were awarded the gold certificate for completing the challenge for five consecutive years.

Catholic School’s Week was again celebrated with the opportunity for parents and friends to visit classrooms and join in activities with their children. The activities focused on the Mathematics being taught in class at the time. Parents also had the opportunity to attend parent information sessions facilitated by school staff, and staff from the Catholic Education Office, which focused on the teaching of Mathematics.

All grades took the opportunity to enhance learning through excursions and all classes attended visiting performances and workshops. Year 2 students visited the Wollongong Science Centre, Kindergarten visited Calmsley Hill City Farm and Year 1 was enthralled by the marine life at the Sydney Aquarium. Year 3 students visited Featherdale Farm whilst Year 4 enjoyed their excursion to ‘The Rocks’. Wedderburn Christian Camp again proved to be a rewarding experience for the Year 5 students and the Year 6 children enjoyed a three-day excursion to Canberra and the snowfields. The Year 6 visit to Mary MacKillop Place also proved a rewarding experience for the children.

Indigenous perspectives are included within at least one unit of work in Human Society and Its Environment with greater focus undertaken in this area in Year 4 and Year 6. During NAIDOC week celebrations, indigenous students from St Thomas More were invited to attend various celebrations at neighbouring schools and communities.

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School continued to develop links with St Patrick’s College and John Therry Catholic High School (JTCHS). Students from St Patrick’s College assisted at the Annual Athletics and Cross Country Carnivals. The children in Year 5 and Year 3 engaged in a series of Physical Education lessons facilitated by the St Patrick’s Year 9 Sports Science students and the Year 5 students from St Thomas More were given the opportunity to attend the ‘Transition Project’ at JTCHS.

**Meeting the needs of all students**

Teachers at St Thomas More are committed to ensuring that all students’ needs are met. In addressing the individual needs of students, a variety of individual support structures were provided. These included peer reading, school assistant intervention and Reading Recovery. Teachers who have children with special education needs in their classes implemented an Individual Plan (IP) to identify academic, social and emotional needs. Transition meetings
were held in Terms 1, 2 and 4 to inform parents of progress and maintain communication between home and school.

The Reading Recovery Program offered an intensive reading program to the students in Year 1. In 2010 16 students accessed the program and all were successfully discontinued from Reading Recovery. The Reading Recovery teacher also provided literacy support to the children who were identified by teachers.

Students with specific learning needs continued to be supported at St Thomas More through the School Review Committee. The Committee comprised a selection of staff under the guidance of the Review Committee Manager. The staff met regularly to review students who were identified with specific needs, and strategies were put in place to assist both the child and teacher with their learning and teaching.

The Diocesan Early Literacy Assessment Program (ELA) was implemented in Kindergarten and Year 1 with information obtained through this assessment being used to inform teachers and to assist in the identification of those children needing learning support.

The St Thomas More Learning Centre had another highly successful year. The Centre continued to cater for those children with an identified intellectual disability.

During National Literacy and Numeracy Week all classes participated in the fun maths activity ‘Reach for the Stars’. An enrichment program was initiated and during each term children from a stage were identified, and learning activities were designed and implemented, to allow the children to be challenged in their learning.

The successful Kindergarten Transition Program implemented in 2009 was further developed with the introduction of additional sessions for identified children to experience learning in the school setting. The focus of the Transition Program is to ensure that all children can experience a safe, happy and rewarding beginning to their academic life.

Expanding Learning Opportunities

Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) needs are well catered for through the weekly PE and Sport lessons. A specialist PE teacher has assisted in lifting the profile of sport in the school as well as improving basic fundamental skills of the children. All children participated in the School Cross Country and Athletics Carnivals. Children from Year 3 to Year 6 and selected Year 2 children participated in the Annual Swimming Carnival. Staff also prepared children for participation in a number of Diocesan and local sporting events and Carnivals including Cross Country, Cricket, Athletics, Netball, Swimming, Soccer, and Rugby League. The school was represented by the Senior and Junior Soccer Teams at the Annual Tiger Shield Soccer Tournament. A number of students represented St Thomas More at Diocesan and MacKillop trials with three children being chosen to represent MacKillop. A real highlight of the year was the opportunity given to the Stage 3 girls to attend a Netball Clinic facilitated by many of the current Australian netball representatives.

The ‘Active Afternoon Program’ completed its third year of operation at St Thomas More. The program is cost free and it allowed children the opportunity to participate in fun, healthy, organised activities, which promote a healthy lifestyle.
Year 5 and Year 6 children had the opportunity to trial for and participate in the Diocesan Public Speaking Competition. During 2010 the Children had the opportunity to learn Keyboard, Guitar, Singing or Drums through the ‘Music Bus’ Program. This Program has gained popularity among the children.

‘The Christmas Story Art Competition and Exhibition 2010’ organised by the Archdiocese of Sydney continued to be a favourite competition for the students. St Thomas More was again successful in having one of its entries chosen for the final exhibition in the Crypt at St Mary’s Cathedral, Sydney.

**Professional Learning**

During 2010, staff at St Thomas More, have remained open to an ongoing commitment to professional learning to better meet the learning needs of students. During the Easter vacation four staff members participated in the Quality Teaching Conference in Wollongong. This conference was designed and facilitated by David Langford. The conference addressed teacher pedagogy as the main source to improve student outcomes.

The teaching of numeracy was a major focus for St Thomas More staff in 2010. A whole school staff development day, numerous staff meetings and peer mentoring sessions were used to facilitate this focus, whereby improvement in classroom practice and consistency in the approach to the teaching of Mathematics and use of mathematical knowledge and understandings, were important outcomes of the learning.

Other professional learning included analysis of the National Assessment Plan for Literacy and Numeracy data, attendance at Spirituality courses including Journey and Bethsaida, mentoring beginning teachers, Peer Support training, Human Sexuality, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Information Communication Technology, School Wide Positive Behaviour for Learning, positive partnerships and using smart boards technology in the classroom setting.

**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.

In May 2010 the children in Year 3 and Year 5 sat the NAPLAN tests. There were 48 Year 3 and 57 Year 5 students who sat these tests. Overall the students performed better in literacy than
numeracy. The Year 3 results show that the students performed better in reading and writing, as did the children in Year 5. Spelling, grammar and punctuation have been identified as areas of focus for 2011. The results also show that the Year 5 girls had greater growth in numeracy compared to the state average and the Year 3 boys improved tremendously in their scores in reading compared to the 2009 results.

**Student Achievement in Bands**

The NAPLAN assesses aspects of literacy and numeracy in Years 3 and 5. It provides 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 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 2010: % in Bands</th>
<th>YEAR 3</th>
<th></th>
<th>YEAR 5</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bands 1 and 2</td>
<td>Bands 3 and 4</td>
<td>Bands 5 and 6</td>
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<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
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**Student Achievement of National Minimum Standard**

Students are considered to be achieving BELOW the National Minimum Standard (NMS) if they are in the lowest Band for each year (Band 1 in Year 3 and Band 3 in Year 5) or if they have been exempt from 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.
Parents, Student and Staff Satisfaction

Students, parents and staff were given the opportunity to provide the school with feedback in a number of key areas.

The majority of student responses to the survey items were overwhelmingly positive in each area. Results indicated that the students were collectively proud to be members of the St Thomas More community. They also wholeheartedly acknowledged the importance of the school as an important means of fostering their understanding of the Catholic faith.

Parents also unanimously affirmed the school for the role that it plays in assisting them to develop in their children, knowledge and understanding of their Catholic faith. Parents noted that there were numerous ways to become involved within the school community and that the details of these opportunities were generally effectively communicated.

All respondents, students, parents and staff, regarded St Thomas More as a safe and supportive environment. Parents noted that this was largely due to the staff who demonstrated genuine interest in the welfare of the students. This interest is translated into the classroom where there was a clear focus on meeting the individual learning needs of students. Staff responses recognise that this focus is not without challenges.

Although overwhelmingly positive, both parent and staff responses indicated that there is a need for the school to investigate ways in which more regular information about student progress can be exchanged. Both staff and parents acknowledged the need for the school to explore methods and establish pathways whereby students are challenged to further maximise their learning outcomes.

All stakeholders indicated there was a need to continue to undertake initiatives that build upon and embed safe and supportive frameworks within the school. These frameworks are primarily underpinned by the principle of enhancing and maximising the learning potential of each child.
School Review and Improvement

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

School Review and Improvement components reviewed and rated in 2010:

- **Key Area 2: Students and their Learning**
  
  2.2 Rights and responsibilities
  
  As a result of work in this component there was an increase in teacher consistency in regard to providing positive reinforcement, an increase in consistency of teacher interaction with children in outside the classroom settings and clearly identified and unpacked school rules in the classroom setting.

- **Key Area 3: Pedagogy**

  3.2 Provision for the diverse needs of learners
  
  As a result of work in this component there was a successful implementation of the ‘Number Sense and Sense-Ability’ learning communities project, information evenings for parents were offered, maths resources were purchased and categorised, number sense activities were expected and identified in the daily teaching of mathematics and NAPLAN results were analysed and targets and strategies developed.

  3.7 Professional learning
  
  As a result of work in this component there were staff meetings which fostered the sharing of ideas of staff, staff developed Individual Professional Growth and Development plans, a Professional Development Planning and Review cycle was completed by teaching staff and workshops were facilitated by identified staff to assist the School Support Officers in the delivery to students of reading and comprehension.

- **Key area 4: Human Resources Leadership and Management**

  4.4 Succession planning
  
  As a result of work in this component a draft Teaching Staff induction policy was formulated, discussed and implemented and staff have taken on greater responsibility in leading professional development within the school.

- **Key Area 5: Resources, Finance and Facilities**

  5.4 Financial Management
  
  As a result of work in this component a four-year school maintenance plan was developed and implemented, and the school budget was developed with the input of all the school leadership team.
Key Area 6: Parents, Partnership, Consultation and Communications

6.3 Linkages with the Wider Community

As a result of work in this component, links with the surrounding high schools were initiated and established, stronger links with the parish were developed, students and staff were more involved in parish liturgies, school events were advertised and reported on to the local community through various media and the school website became a greater focal point for the communication of information to the community.

School Review and Improvement components to be reviewed and rated in 2011:

- **Key Area 1: Catholic Life and Religious Education**
  1.1 Vision and Mission

- **Key Area 2: Students and their Learning**
  2.1 Educational Potential

- **Key Area 3: Pedagogy**
  3.1 Curriculum Provision
  3.4 Planning, Programming and Evaluation

- **Key Area 4: Human Resources, Leadership and Management**
  4.1 Recruitment, Selection and Retention of Staff
  - 4.3 An Ethical Workplace Culture

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