Annual School Report

2013
About This Report

St Michael’s Catholic Primary School, Thirroul is registered by the Board of Studies NSW 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 CEO. This Report has been approved by Wollongong CEO to ensure compliance with all Board of Studies NSW 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 2014.

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

St Michael’s Catholic Primary School
PO Box 86
Thirroul NSW 2515
Ph: (02) 4267 2560
Fax: (02) 4268 1482
Email: info@smtdow.catholic.edu.au
Website: www.smtdow.catholic.edu.au

Parish Priest: Father Ken Cafe

Principal: Mr Danny Sykes
Date: 9 December 2013
Vision Statement

St Michael’s Catholic Primary School: Inspiring excellence in learning, leading and living the faith.

Message from Key School Bodies

Principal’s Message

St Michael’s Catholic Primary School’s Annual Report provides the local and wider communities the opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the significant achievements that have occurred in 2013.

There have been many exciting events occur throughout the year at St Michael’s, with one of the highlights being the continued implementation of “The Leader In Me” program into the school’s curriculum and the Catholic school setting. The program strives to bring about an intrinsic and authentic change in culture where every student, staff member, parent and community member is involved in helping to build the depth of character and high level of competence needed to thrive in the 21st Century. The program centres around Dr Stephen Covey’s “The 7 Habits,” a set of guiding principles and these were taught through explicit lessons, signage displayed around the school environment and information delivered at assemblies and in the weekly school newsletters.

Thank you to everyone who has been involved with the school, especially our Parish Priest for his valued support, the staff who worked with great dedication for the betterment of the students and the parent volunteers who gave generously of their time in so many ways. The Parents’ and Friends’ Association (P&F) has been extremely active in their support, having worked in close partnership with the school to raise funds to cater for the educational needs of the students.

This Annual Report highlights the vibrant and enthusiastic St Michael’s school community, and the harmonious partnership that is enjoyed between home, school and the Parish.

Parent Involvement

Throughout 2013 the P&F undertook a number of successful fundraising activities and achieved a fantastic result raising $44 000. The P & F provided financial assistance to the school to purchase resources, including iPads, signage for “The Leader In Me” program, as well as resources for Key Learning Areas, our bubble classes and for the library. The P & F also provided funds for the tuition fees of the school choir, the new shade sail, additional outdoor seating, new garden bed edging and a musical instrument storage cabinet.
The P & F and its committees also co-ordinated a dedicated group of volunteers to regularly maintain and beautify the school grounds, to operate a healthy canteen five days a week for the full school year and to regularly open the uniform shop to provide families with convenient access to school uniform items. P & F volunteers also provided the school valuable assistance to host events including grandparents’ day, orientation day and mothers’ & fathers’ day stalls.

The contributions of the P & F have been many and are only possible due to the ongoing commitment and generosity of our whole school community. Thank you one and all for a successful 2013.

*Parents and Friends Association, President*

**Student Leadership**

There are many opportunities for students to lead at St Michael’s. Year 6 students were placed into leadership groups and performed responsibilities such as leading morning prayer and weekly assemblies, assisting students during lunchtime and organising whole school discos. Another important aspect of leadership was being involved in “Mini Vinnies” and helping raise money for the needy of our community. This year the school has continued “The Leader In Me” program and we have been trying to live out “The Seven Habits” whilst following the school rules; “Take Care of Yourself, Take Care of Each Other and Take Care of This Place.” Year 6 has also led Peer Support lessons involving students talking about ways to be resilient and getting on positively with others. Finally, another leadership responsibility has been helping the Kindergarten (K) students using the buddy system.

Students at St Michael’s have daily leadership responsibilities, which will prepare us for the future.

*School Leaders*

**School Profile**

---

**School Context**

St Michael’s Catholic Primary School is a Catholic systemic co-educational school located in Thirroul. The school caters for students in Years Kindergarten (K) to Years 6 (K-6) and has a current enrolment of 241. The majority of students come from Thirroul, Austinmer and Wombarra and recently there has been an increase in the number of students seeking enrolment from suburbs south of Thirroul.

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 in the early 1980s, 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.

**Student Enrolments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2013 Enrolments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBOTE</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.smtdow.catholic.edu.au](http://www.smtdow.catholic.edu.au) and the CEO website: [www.dow.catholic.edu.au](http://www.dow.catholic.edu.au). No changes were made to this Diocesan Policy in 2013.

**Student Attendance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2013 Attendance</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kinder</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>96.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>94.7</td>
<td>95.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>95.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>95.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>94.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>94.1</td>
<td>93.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>92.7</td>
<td>96.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole school</td>
<td>94.6</td>
<td>95.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Management of Student Non Attendance**

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. Schools, in partnership with parents, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, school staff, as part of their duty of care, monitor part or whole day absences.
Rolls are marked every morning using the Schools Administration System (SAS 2000) codes. The daily attendance sheet 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 absence notes are filed. Unknown absences are followed up on a weekly basis via print outs from the School Administration System (SAS) which are sent home for the parents to complete and return to school. Parents must complete an Application for Exemption form to apply for holiday leave greater than five school days. If approval is given by the Principal a Certificate of Exemption is issued for each student in the family. Should a teacher be notified that a child is leaving the school, this information is directed to the office and a transfer note is completed following Board of Studies requirements.

**Staffing Profile**

There are a total of 17 teachers and 6 support staff at St Michael’s Catholic Primary School. This number includes 7 full-time, 10 part-time teachers.

**Teacher Standards**

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

| Teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised by AEI - NOOSR* | 100 % |
| Have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia within AEI-NOOSR* guidelines but lack formal teacher qualifications | 0% |
| Do not have qualifications as above but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context | 0% |

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

**Teacher Attendance and Retention**

The average daily teacher attendance rate for 2013 was 95.93%. This does not include planned leave such as Maternity or Long Service Leave. The teacher retention rate from 2013 to 2014 was 100%.
Professional Learning

During 2013, St Michael’s Catholic Primary School personnel undertook a range of professional learning activities related to improving student outcomes, particularly through School Review & Improvement (SRI) priorities.

These included:
A. St Michael’s Catholic Primary School whole school development days involving 17 staff. These days focused on:
   • The Australian Curriculum;
   • Teaching and Learning Standards Framework; and,
   • Staff Spirituality Day focussing on Mission.

B. Other professional learning activities provided at school level including CEO run courses:
   • Collaborative Classrooms (3 staff);
   • Learning Technologies (3 staff);
   • Refresher training in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Emergency Care (12 members); and,
   • Leading Literacy and Numeracy (2 members).

The average expenditure by the school on professional learning per staff member was $336.

In addition, professional learning opportunities were provided by the Catholic Education Office with an additional average expenditure per staff Member of $831.

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, the school community and parishioners in a supporting environment.

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.

Throughout the year, significant Church and community occasions were commemorated with special Masses, liturgies and assemblies. The school community celebrated with the Parish Priest the Opening School Mass and the Blessing of the Year 6 Leaders, the Feast of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop and a Farewell Mass for the Assistant Principal who served for 19 years at the school. In addition, students participated in Liturgies of the Word for Ash Wednesday, Catholic Schools Week, Book Week and Grandparents’ Day. Each class also organised and presented a Liturgy of the Word for special feast days, Holy Week and Easter. Year 6 students joined with other Year 6 students from the North West Cluster and participated in a Year 6 Mass with Bishop Peter which was held at Mt Carmel Catholic High School Hall, Varroville.
school participated and lead commemoration services for Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) Day and Remembrance Day, at the Thirroul Cenotaph with Thirroul Public School.

Embracing the legacy of the foundress, St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, “Never see a need without doing something about it,” St Michael’s continued to support those less fortunate by donating money and food raised through a broad range of school activities. Many of these activities were a part of the generous support our students give to the forty eight Mini Vinnies students. In 2013 as part of the St Vincent de Paul Winter Appeal, the students organised a ‘Fill The Vinnies Van’ collection whereby tinned food, noodle cups and muesli bars were some of the items collected. In addition, the Mini Vinnies organised two cupcake stalls. One stall raised $204, which was used to purchase doonas. The second stall raised $205 for the Bush Fire Appeal.

During October, two weeks were set aside for supporting the missions in Mongolia. The week commenced with a Liturgy of the Word. Each class participated in three fundraising events. These included a ‘Crazy Sock Day’ a ‘Lunch Order Day’ and A ‘Sushi Meal Deal’ day. As a result of these fundraising events, the children and their families raised $1 107.

The whole school community continued to model their Catholic values by supporting special fundraising activities including the Surf Life Saving - Boardies Day ($337), Cystic Fibrosis ($418), Project Compassion ($196.95), Juvenile Diabetes ($363) and the Convey for Canteen ($550). In addition, at all school Masses food items were collected for the local St Vincent de Paul Society to distribute to the needy of the Parish.

The school supported the Parish Sacramental Programs. The school and parents worked together to prepare children for the Sacraments of Penance, First Eucharist and Confirmation. The Parish Priest, class teachers, the state school catechists and the Religious Education Coordinator (REC) prepared an innovative, interactive program for each sacrament.

Teachers were committed to their individual faith formation throughout the year as well as contributing to the bi-weekly focus on communal prayer. A highlight of this personal growth was evident in the Spirituality Day held at The Abbey, where staff had invaluable time to reflect upon our faith and pray with the Carmelite Sisters.

**Religious Literacy Assessment**

The Religious Literacy Assessment Program for Year 4 students was successfully completed within schools across the diocese in 2013. The school cohort in 2013 consisted of forty two Year 4 students who sat the Religious Literacy Assessment Workbook (Part A) on 26 August 2013 and forty nine completed the Extended Task (Part B). The Extended Task was based on the Unit: *One with God’s Creation* and was completed during the first half of Term 3.

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

- Ministry of Jesus;
- Understanding of the Creation story;
- Knowledge of Jesus and His teachings;
- Understanding of the qualities of Saints; and,
- Lenten Practices.

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:

- Recall the events of Easter;
- Identify key symbols of Baptism; and,
- Identify the key symbols, signs and rituals of the Catholic Tradition.

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 works of art, IT presentations, storybooks, posters, dance and sculptures.

For Part A 24% of students were placed in the developing level, 69% in the achieving level and 7% were in the extending level.

For Part B 2% of students were placed in the developing level, 49% in the achieving level and 49% were in the extending level.

Combining Parts A and B, 13% of students were placed in the developing level, 59% in the achieving level and 28% were in the extending level for Religious Literacy.

**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 2013:**

- **Key Area 3: Pedagogy**
  
  3.1 Curriculum Provisions

  Opportunities were created for professional dialogue and the sharing of information centred on the Australian Curriculum.
3.3 Teaching Practices

The Diocesan Learning and Teaching Framework (DLTF) was used to develop a whole school approach to improve the quality of learning and teaching.

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

  4.2 Professional Development of Staff

  A school-wide systematic approach was developed to share knowledge gained at Professional Development courses and meetings.

- **Key Area 5: Resources Finances and facilities**

  5.1 ICT Resources

  A high priority was placed on Professional Development in ICT, which supports the effective implementation of iPad technology into the school.

- **Key Area 7: Strategic Leadership and Management**

  7.2 Innovation, Development and Change

  “The Leader in Me” program has been implemented into all aspects of school culture contributing to building an effective learning community.

**School Review and Improvement components to be reviewed and rated in 2014:**

- **Key Area 1 Catholic Life and Religious Education:**

  1.2 Religious Education

  Assist teachers in designing quality Religious Education assessment tasks.

- **Key Area 2: Students and Their Learning**

  2.4 Integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

  The implementation of 1:1 iPad technology to improve contemporary student learning.

- **Key Area 3: Pedagogy**

  3.1 Curriculum Provision

  Creating opportunities for professional dialogue and the sharing of information centred on the Australian Curriculum.

  3.3 Teaching Practices

  Use the DLTF to develop a whole school approach to improve the quality of learning and teaching.

  3.7 Professional Learning

  Developing a culture of quality teaching using the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) standards and an improved Professional Development Planning and Review (PDPR) process.
• Key Area 5: Resources, Finance and Facilities

5.1 ICLT Resources

Placing a high priority on Professional Development in ICLT, which supports the effective implementation of iPad technology into the school.

Financial Summary

During 2013 the school continued its financial commitment to ‘The Leader in Me’ student leadership program with the addition of signage throughout the school and grounds. The school also provided each class teacher with an iPad to enhance student learning. New security fencing and gates within the school grounds were installed for the safety of students and staff, and in the latter part of the year a new shade sail was erected in the playground. These projects were financed with the assistance of our P&F Association and St Michael’s Parish School Enhancement and Debt Servicing Obligation (SEDSO) funds. Our school also received a Green Scene grant of $2 500 from the NSW Office of Environment.

The following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for St Michael’s Catholic Primary School, Thirroul for the year ended 31 December 2013. This data is taken from the 2013 financial return to the Australian Government, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.
Student Welfare

Introduction

St Michael's Catholic Primary School is committed to providing the highest quality Catholic education for all students, spiritually, academically, physically, socially and emotionally. The well-being of students is at the heart of all that is undertaken within the school.

Student leadership was heavily promoted throughout the year especially through the introduction of “The Leader In Me” program. In Term 4, Peer Support groups were conducted with the special focus placed on resilience. The Year 6 students formed leadership groups in the following areas; public speaking, the environment, fund raising, playground, student voice and liturgy. Assemblies were conducted by student leaders and other initiatives such as school discos and helping younger students at lunchtime were the responsibility of the Year 6 students. The school’s Buddy System also worked effectively this year with the Years 5 and 6 students helping Kindergarten children settle into school life.

A CatholicCare counsellor attended the school, three times a month and this service ensured that students experiencing difficulties were given specific support. The counsellor also worked closely with teachers and the Principal to address student welfare concerns.

Students’ achievements were acknowledged in the school newsletter and at assemblies. An Awards Assembly was held each Friday to celebrate individual student success. All students had the opportunity to earn a range of awards from Superstar Awards through to a St Michael’s Blue Medallion.

Pastoral Care

This year St Michael’s School continued the School-Wide Positive Behaviours for Learning Program (SPB4L). The SPB4L initiative focused on establishing a safe and predictable school environment. This program supports long-term success, both socially and academically and aims to explicitly teach expectations for positive behaviours. The school’s (SPB4L) policy clearly outlines the school’s approach to ensuring that all students are safe and that the school rules: Take Care of Yourself, Take Care of Each Other and Take Care of this Place are well understood and followed by all students.

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 2013.
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 Catholic Primary School is a learning community committed to delivering quality learning and teaching, ensuring that all student needs are addressed. With a renewed focus this year on exploring the DLTF, the staff has embedded the critical dimensions in the planning and delivery of quality learning and teaching across all Key Learning Areas (KLAs). There is a spirit of collaboration across the stages in the decision-making processes that are designed to improve learning outcomes.

**Curriculum and Pedagogy**

*Syllabus implementation*

NSW Board of Studies syllabus documents, along with the Diocese of Wollongong Religious Education Curriculum form the basis of the courses of study devised and implemented by classroom teachers.

In 2013, the school was engaged in on-going professional learning in preparation for the Australian Curriculum in NSW in 2014. The focus was on English and Mathematics, devoting time to unpacking the new curriculum and becoming familiar with the new features and structure.

*Assessment and reporting*

In 2013, the school continued to implement the assessment and reporting procedures, which complied with Federal Government requirements. Student reports, containing the Common Grade Scale were sent home in June and December to parents/caregivers. Parent/teacher interviews were also held in June and after the December reports had been sent home they were available on request.

At St Michael’s assessment is a part of the learning and teaching cycle, where assessment for learning drives the learning and teaching and assessment of learning provides a picture of student achievement and progress at that point in time. All students were encouraged to also be a part of the assessment process, undertaking opportunities to reflect on their own learning and identify areas of strength and areas for improvement.
Integration

Integration across the KLAs is an effective strategy to address multiple outcomes and connect learning. Authentic integration at St Michael’s was implemented across the grades, in particular in Science and Technology, Human Society and Its Environment and English. This enabled teachers to provide a variety of quality learning experiences whilst explicitly making connections with students’ learning.

Technology supporting learning

St Michael’s three-year Information and Communication Learning Technologies (ICLT) Plan has guided the purchasing of resources and the provision and accessing of professional development for staff. During 2013, the following hardware was purchased: two Apple TVs and the replacement of a projector.

This year was a year of preparation for the launch of the 1:1 iPad program in 2014. This involved providing staff with fortnightly professional development based on the purposeful and pedagogically sound use of iPad technology. The teaching staff was provided with school-loaned iPads and gifted with $50 iTunes cards during 2013 to enable the purchasing of educational apps and the integration of iPad technology into the classrooms. The ICLT coordinator also developed policies and user agreements to support the rollout of the 1:1 initiative for both parents and students. Two information evenings were hosted by St Michael’s to support parental understanding of this new initiative and a website was developed to support both parents and students. Classroom teachers involved in the 1:1 rollout have visited neighbouring schools to view the 1:1 iPad program in action.

St Michael’s continued to place emphasis on Digital Citizenship. This was supported by teachers building a digital citizenship component into their parent information evenings, and all students participating in digital citizenship lessons each term.

To enhance communication and collaboration between staff, students and parents and creativity in learning experiences for students, Information Communication Learning Technologies (ICLT) will continue to be a key initiative at St Michael’s.

Cross Curriculum

Literacy strategies

Literacy continued to be a significant focus and priority at St Michael’s in 2013. The staff continued with professional learning opportunities through staff meetings revisiting the pedagogy of ‘Modelled, Guided and Independent’ practice in an effective literacy session. The introduction of the new Australian Curriculum in NSW provided another opportunity for staff to reflect and evaluate current practices and identify areas of strength and improvement. There was a deliberate focus on writing in 2013 and this was supported during collaborative programming meetings and supervision.
A significant part of Book Week celebrations at St Michael’s was the involvement of all students in literacy-based experiences involving short-listed texts. There was a day of rotations as well as an opportunity for all students to visit the local community library. In addition there was a performance from a drama company based on one of the short-listed books.

In 2013 St Michael’s once again participated in the Premier’s Reading Challenge. This experience encouraged students’ love of reading and provided an opportunity for students to participate in a State-wide initiative.

Numeracy strategies
Numeracy continued to be a high priority at St Michael’s school in 2013. The development of effective numeracy practices was a focus and this was aligned with the guidelines from the CEO, Developing Effective Numeracy Strategies in a Mathematics Session. Staff continued to refine their practice and collaboratively share experiences and learning’s to ensure quality learning and teaching across the school.

The introduction of the new Australian Curriculum in NSW provided another opportunity to place a priority on quality pedagogy whilst becoming familiar with new content and structure. In conjunction with this process, staff focused on differentiating the curriculum in the classroom and developing a shared understanding of numeracy and mathematics.

Multicultural Studies
Year 4 participated in an introduction to Chinese Language and Culture Course. A teacher from Holy Spirit College delivered the course once a week with a focus on language and culture. It culminated in the students presenting a play to each class.

Meeting the needs of all students
Gifted Education
The Gifted Education Team has worked collaboratively with classroom teachers during 2013 to support students in maximising their potential. This has involved teachers in Years 1 – 6 collaboratively developing individual education plans for identified students, sharing these plans with relevant stakeholders and submitting the documentation twice annually. During Term 2 of 2013, all Year 3 students sat the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) General Ability Test (AGAT). This identified students who then participated in the Slosson assessment, as per school policy. Assessment results were then communicated to classroom teachers and parents.
Diversifying learning

Diversification of learning is very much a priority for St Michael’s. Some of the strategies teachers have used during 2013 were:

- Self-directed learning (personal interest projects);
- Rich questioning techniques;
- Open-ended tasks;
- William’s Model;
- Tiering of tasks; and,
- Bloom’s Taxonomy.

This year, students in both Stage 2 and 3 also participated in the Diocesan online program Stretching Potential through Learning in Interactive and Challenging Environments (SPLICED). This involved students working through challenging tasks in an online environment. Students were also offered other opportunities such as:

- University of NSW Competitions;
- Maths Challenge;
- Weekend courses at St George Girl’s High School;
- Other competitions; and,
- Self-directed learning.

Students in both Stage 2 and 3 have participated in self-directed learning experiences where they have identified areas of interest, devised open-ended rich questions and then set about researching their interest area. This culminated in students showcasing their project to their peers.

Special Education needs

This year, the school’s Review Committee has monitored the progress of students identified by teachers as having learning difficulties. This involved classroom teachers completing relevant documentation and meeting with The Review Committee on a regular basis (once per term) to discuss the needs of students and possible strategies that could be implemented.

Teachers also liaised with outside professionals such as psychologists, occupational therapists and speech therapists when needed.

In 2013 St Michael’s continued to implement a Literacy Support Program for students in Years 2 – 6. This involved classroom teachers identifying specific students who required support. These students would then participate in two small group sessions per week, led by the Assistant Principal or nominated other. It is believed that these sessions have been effective in strengthening spelling, writing, and reading skills.
Expanding Learning Opportunities

St Michael’s continues to provide a variety of expanded learning opportunities for its students. Members of the school choir and band participated in a number of performances throughout the year.

Years 5 and 6 students entered the Diocese of Sydney Christmas Art Competition and one Year 6 student was successful in being chosen for the finals in Sydney.

Students from Years 3 to Years 6 were involved in a Friday chess competition against several schools in the Illawarra. Twelve students also attended the annual chess day, which was held at The Illawarra Grammar School.

Students from Kindergarten to Year 6 participated in the annual class and school public speaking competitions. As well as this, two Stage 3 students participated in the Regional Public Speaking finals. Students were also given the opportunity to enter the school talent quest competition, which was held in Term 4.

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 Cross Country Team which was placed second at the Diocesan Carnival. Three students also received medallions at Diocesan Sports Awards in November. Throughout the year, various school carnivals were conducted including swimming, cross country and athletics. These events encouraged maximum student participation and developed community spirit.

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 is implemented for students in Years 3 and 5 and the results provide valuable information about student achievements in literacy and numeracy. Analysis of the results is used at school level to support the enhancement of literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students.

In 2013 students in Years 3 and 5 at St Michael’s Catholic School achieved a high standard results in all aspects of NAPLAN. In Year 3, 100% of students were above the National Minimum Standard for both literacy and numeracy with the exception of Grammar and
Punctuation. Year 3 achieved well above the state average in all aspects of NAPLAN, with particular strength in numeracy. In Year 5, 100% also achieved at or above National Minimum standard across all components in literacy and numeracy. Year 5 results were significantly above the state average in reading, writing and numeracy.

The NAPLAN results were released in September and parents were given the opportunity to reflect on and discuss their child's results with the class teacher. The data was analysed and shared at a whole school level, focusing on the strengths and areas for improvement. As a result goals and targets were created for 2014 with an emphasis on all students achieving their expected learning gain.

Student Achievement in Bands

The National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (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 2013: % in Bands</th>
<th>YEAR 3</th>
<th>YEAR 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bands 1 and 2</td>
<td>Bands 3 and 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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) are achieving AT the NMS. Students in all other Bands are achieving ABOVE the NMS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAPLAN 2013: % AT or ABOVE NMS</th>
<th>YEAR 3</th>
<th>YEAR 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parent, Student and Staff Satisfaction

At the end of the 2013 School Year parents, students and staff were given the opportunity by means of a survey to provide the school with feedback on its performance in a number of key areas. The survey was a way for the school to gauge how well they had achieved their goals for the year and it gave important feedback for future planning.

Summary of Parent Satisfaction Findings

All parents were given the opportunity to respond to the survey. Respondents agreed that the school helped the students develop a knowledge and understanding about the Catholic faith. They also believed that opportunities were provided for parents to be involved. They confirmed that the school provided a safe and supportive environment and that the teachers were genuinely interested in the welfare of each child.

A small group of parents indicated that they would like more information about their child’s progress. A small group also believed that the school should do more in striving to meet their child’s learning needs.
Summary of Student Satisfaction Findings

In November one hundred and thirty three students from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 were surveyed. There were seven questions in the survey ranging from their pride in the school, teacher encouragement and understanding their rights and responsibilities. The students were adamant that the school helped them understand the Catholic faith. Students also indicated that they were proud of their school and that they felt safe at school. A small group of students indicated that they were unsure of whom to approach for help if they had a problem.

Summary of Staff Satisfaction Findings

An analysis of the responses indicated that staff members were most positive in all the areas covered by the survey. In addition, the respondents commented favourably on the safe and supportive environment where the welfare of each child is a priority. Staff also believed that the school helped students develop a knowledge and understanding about Catholic tradition.