Annual School Report
2014
About This Report

Stella Maris Catholic Primary School, Shellharbour 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:

Stella Maris Catholic Primary School
PO Box 4126
Shellharbour  NSW  2529

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Fax: (02) 4295 1885
Email: info@smsdow.catholic.edu.au
Website: www.smsdow.catholic.edu.au

Parish Priest: Fr Bryan Jones

Principal: Mr Francis Wafer
Date: 13 December 2014
Vision Statement

‘Reverence the Story of All People’

This statement underpins everything we do at Stella Maris Catholic Primary School. By ‘Reverencing the Story’ we believe that we see all members of our school community as being of equal importance. We will care for, support and assist them to the best of our ability.

Message from Key School Bodies

Principal’s Message

This year we have continued to build upon the strong foundations that underpin all that we do at Stella Maris and through our annual plan we have continued to improve our school and increase the opportunities offered and taught to our students. The evidence we have, suggests that our students are happy and enjoy coming to school. Assessment results indicate that our students’ knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith is good.

As always we are grateful for the support of All Saints Parish, our pastor Fr Bryan Jones and the Assistant Priest, Fr Geoffrey Allen. Once again our Year 6 students celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation, with Bishop Peter Ingram and our Year 3 students received the Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist. Throughout the year regular Masses and Liturgies were celebrated, with special liturgies for ANZAC Day, Foundation Day, Grandparents Day and Mission Week.

As well as the usual school subjects and activities, students also had the opportunity to experience many extra and co-curricular activities including a large number of sporting activities, competitions and also enrichment days organised by local Catholic primary schools.

We are very grateful for the support that the staff and students received from parents. We especially thank our Parents’ and Friends’ Association (P&F) who worked hard for our school supporting initiatives, raising funds and helping with the general upkeep of the school.

Parent Involvement

It has been a successful year for Stella Maris Catholic Primary School. The P&F held various events and activities throughout the year to raise funds for the school and in turn build and strengthen school spirit and community. These included a Welcome Disco, Easter Raffle, Fashion Parade, Mother’s Day and Father’s Day stalls, Spring Disco and our Cardbox
fundraiser. Planning has also commenced for our major fundraising event – Autumn Fair 2015.

In 2014 the P&F raised $8 000 and this money was spent directly on technology and resources for our children, specifically towards the purchase of four Smartboards and fourteen iPads as well as new reading resources. P&F funds also contributed towards the replacement of the old playground equipment.

It has been a pleasure working with the P&F Executive Committee and I wish to sincerely thank all the parents who have generously volunteered their time to help make this year a success. Thank you to the Principal and the staff for their ongoing support.

Parents and Friends Association, President

Student Leadership

To be given the leadership roles of School Captains for 2014 was a privilege and was a wonderful and rewarding experience. It was very exciting when we received our Captains’ badges and shirts. We have had many opportunities to attend community functions such as the morning dawn service on ANZAC Day, the memorable launch of Project Compassion, the Indigenous Walk and Remembrance Day. We have also proudly participated in all liturgies and assemblies at school.

It has been a special experience to work with our fellow Student Councillors on fundraising days. It has been very helpful to have the full support of the school staff behind us in all our activities around the school.

Being School Captain has been a meaningful and enjoyable experience. We have developed in our schoolwork and in our leadership skills.

School Captains

School Profile

_____________________________________________________________________________________

School Context

Stella Maris Catholic Primary School is a Catholic systemic co-educational school located in Shellharbour Village. The school caters for students in Years K-6 and has a current enrolment of 348 students.

Classes began at Stella Maris Catholic Primary School in May, 1958. For fifty years the school was led by the Sisters of Charity and a number of lay staff. In 2009, the last Sister of Charity,
Sr Colleen Mills, resigned from the principalship. Since then the school has been led by lay Principals.

The school’s motto is Faith, Hope and Love. Our school’s vision Statement is Reverence the Story of All People. Sixteen core values underpin the teaching and ethos of our school. All children are encouraged and supported in striving to reach their full potential. This occurs in a caring and safe environment where children can enjoy learning, interact with others and develop suitable knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. As well as a quality teaching program, the students at Stella Maris are offered a wide range of extra curricula activities such as an annual school camp for Year 6, sports Gala Days, Public Speaking, Chess Competition and many other activities.

In the spirit of Mary Aikenhead, the founder of the Sisters of Charity, social justice activities continue to be a priority. Regular activities include the support of Catholic Mission, Caritas, St Vincent de Paul and other local charities. Our outreach program supports the work of St Vincent de Paul, the Parish Care Group and Warilla RSL Sub Branch.

Student Enrolments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2013 Enrolments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
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<td>LBOTE</td>
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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.smsdow.catholic.edu.au and the CEO website: www.dow.catholic.edu.au. No changes were made to this Diocesan Policy in 2014.
Student Attendance

<table>
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<tr>
<th>2014 Attendance</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kinder</td>
<td>96.7</td>
<td>96.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td>94.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>96.4</td>
<td>95.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>94.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>96.6</td>
<td>95.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>96.1</td>
<td>94.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>95.1</td>
<td>95.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole school</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>95.1</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, monitors part or whole day absences.

A School Support Officer (SSO) manages the Attendance Register. The Attendance Register is kept on School Administrative System (SAS 2000). Student and family contact numbers are updated each Term. Teachers mark a hard copy of the roll each morning which is then sent to the school office by 9:30am. Children who arrive late are taken by parents to the school office to collect a late note. The roll data is verified by inspection by the Senior School Support Officer (SSSO) twice per Term.

Parents are expected to provide an explanation of their child’s absence by providing a handwritten note, a letter faxed to the school or an email sent to the school office. Explanations of absence are received and verified by teachers who keep a record of each note. If a student is absent from school for more than three days a SSO will phone the child’s parents to ascertain why they are absent. A School Support Officer monitors the frequency of student absences and informs the Principal if any student is absent regularly from school. Parents who know their child will be absent from school are requested to apply in writing for a Leave of Absence or School Exemption form from the Principal.
Staffing Profile

There are a total of 20 teachers and 6 support staff at Stella Maris Catholic Primary School. This number includes 15 full-time, 5 part-time teachers.

Teacher Standards

Teacher qualifications fall into 1 of 2 categories for all teaching staff responsible for delivering the curriculum:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised by AEI - NOOSR* guidelines</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A bachelor degree from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lacking formal teacher education</td>
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*Australian Education Institution – National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition Staff Retention

Teacher Attendance and Retention

The average daily teacher attendance rate for 2014 was 98.2%. This does not include planned leave such as Maternity or Long Service Leave. The teacher retention rate from 2013 to 2014 was 95%.

Professional Learning

During 2014, Stella Maris Catholic Primary School personnel undertook a range of professional learning activities related to improving student outcomes, particularly through School Review & Improvement priorities.

These included:

A. Stella Maris Catholic Primary School whole school development days involving 20 staff. These days focused on:
   ● Professional Development by Peer Review; and
   ● Staff Spirituality.

B. Other professional learning activities provided at school level including CEO run courses:
   ● School Review & Improvement (SRI) – 26 staff;
   ● regular staff meetings on Numeracy, Literacy and Information Technology – 20 staff;
   ● Leading Literacy and Numeracy – 3 staff;
Religious Education Literacy – 1 staff;
Information Technology – 2 staff;
Catholic Principals’ Conference – 1 staff;
Numeracy Course – 1 staff;
Spirituality Course – 8 staff;
First Aid Refresher Course – 25 staff;
General Pedagogy courses – 20 staff;
Data Analysis - 2 staff;
Science Course - 20 staff;
School wide Positive Behaviour For Learning (SPB4L) – 4 staff; and
Autism Spectrum Training -2 staff

The average expenditure by the school on professional learning per staff member was $374.

In addition, professional learning opportunities were provided by the Catholic Education Office with an additional average expenditure per staff member of $875.

Catholic Life & Religious Education

Stella Maris Catholic School promoted and provided opportunities for the school community to actively participate in the life of the Parish and the wider church. There were opportunities for celebration of Mass on a weekly basis with parishioners. Children in Sacramental programs participated in Thanksgiving Masses with Nazareth School. Years 3-6 joined with Nazareth Catholic Primary School and Corpus Christi Catholic High School for our Feast Day Parish Mass at our new church. There was a strong commitment to live out our vision statement ‘Reverence the Story of All People’ with several outreach programs continuing through 2014. These included the Bass and Flinders Day Care Centre in Warilla, All Saints Parish Care Group and the local St Vincent de Paul Chapter.

Children had opportunities to pray daily. The school prayer was recited daily at the school morning assembly. Reflective prayer continued across the school with children experiencing varying forms of formal and informal prayer. The Rosary was recited in all classes during October and the school participated in National Rosary Day. Liturgies were held for special occasions. Guest speakers from Catholic Mission attended our Mission Liturgy. Other liturgies throughout the year included ANZAC Day, Catholic Schools’ Week, Kinder Transition, Easter, Beginning of School Year and End of Year Thanksgiving Liturgy.

The school continued to give witness to our Catholic faith. Every class had a prayer space that portrayed the liturgical seasons and colours. A sacred space displayed in the school foyer and in the staffroom depicted special occasions and feast days such as First Communion, Lent and Advent.
The students at Stella Maris were committed to social justice issues in 2014. Every class had their own Mission Box on their prayer table and a total of $980 was raised during Lent for the Project Compassion appeal. The school also raised $3 100 in funds for the people of Jamaica by means of a Zumbathon.

Stella Maris children were also involved in the St Vincent de Paul Christmas luncheon which is held each year for the needy people in our area. Year 6 children served, cleared and provided entertainment at this function.

The school was involved in Parish celebrations such the Parish Expo and the Reconciliation and First Holy Communion Sacramental Programs. In 2014 36 children received their First Eucharist. The Year 6 Confirmation program was school-based and 36 children received the Sacrament of Confirmation. This program was supported by the Confirmation Reflection Day and Year 6 Mass with Bishop Peter Ingham held at All Saints Parish Church. The Staff continued their faith formation through weekly prayer. In Term 4, the staff participated in a Spiritual Retreat Day.

**Religious Literacy Assessment**

The Religious Literacy Assessment Program for Year 4 students was successfully completed within schools across the diocese in 2014. The school cohort in 2014 consisted of 47 Year 4 students who sat the Religious Literacy Assessment Workbook (Part A) on 25th August 2014 and 42 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: 

- knowledge of the key, signs, symbols and traditions of the Catholic Church; and
- knowledge of the lives of the saints.

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:

- express the concept of the Holy Trinity.

Students in Part B displayed improvements in their ability to work with and apply their religious knowledge.

For Part A, 21.3% of students were placed in the developing level, 74.5% in the achieving level
and 4.3% were in the extending level.

For Part B, 0% of students were placed in the developing level, 84.3% in the achieving level and 15.7% were in the extending level.

Combining Parts A and B, 17.1% of students were placed in the developing level, 72.3% in the achieving level and 10.6% were in the extending level for Religious Literacy.

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 2014:

- **Key Area 1: Catholic Life and Religious Education**
  
  1.3 Catholic Life and Culture
  Goal: To improve practices within our school to enhance our Catholic identity.

- **Key Area 3: Pedagogy**
  
  3.4 Planning, Programming and Evaluation
  Goal: To improve professional practice and the quality of learning opportunities.

- **Key Area 4: Human Resources, Leadership and Management**
  
  4.4 Succession Planning
  Goal: To encourage the development of future leaders in our school by providing suitable opportunities for shared leadership.

- **Key Area 5: Resources, Finance and Facilities**
  
  5.2 Use of Resources and Space
  Goal: To enhance teaching and learning through highly effective management and
utilisation of resources.

- **Key Area 6: Parents, Partnership, Consultation and Communication**

  6.1 Parent Involvement  
  Goal: To promote, encourage and develop Parental Involvement.

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

  7.2 Innovation, Development and Change  
  Goal: To develop a whole school community approach to improve student’s learning and pedagogy

**School Review and Improvement components to be reviewed and rated in 2015:**

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

  1.4 Parents, parishes and the broader church

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

  2.3 Reporting Student achievement  
  2.4 Integration of Information and Communication

- **Key Area 3: Pedagogy**

  3.3 Teaching practices

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

  4.5 Overall compliance with legislation and requirements

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

  7.1 Planning for improvement
Financial Summary

The major expenditure in 2014 included the purchase of more laptops and iPads for classroom use by students. Smartboards were also purchased for classroom use and the upgrade of the playground equipment. The total expenditure for purchases in this area totalled $63,930.

In Term 2 the school received a grant of $2,304 from Edex Australia, which was used to buy iPads for the school and Shellharbour City Council donated $1,200 as an environmental grant. The largest donation came from the P&F which donated $15,000 to the school, which was used partly to fund the update of the children’s play area.

Unspent school funds from 2014 were held over for the replacement of school Information Technology equipment, library refurbishments, new classroom furniture and curriculum resources.

The school was also the recipient of a large SEDSO project to address rainwater leaking into the classrooms on the south side of the school. This project laid down new stormwater drainage, fitted new downpipes, laid new concrete and replaced existing fences. Currently it is estimated that the project will cost between $30,000 and $40,000.

The following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for Stella Maris Catholic Primary School, Shellharbour 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

Effective pastoral care is at the core of a Catholic School. A child’s wellbeing creates for the child links to a life lived to the fullest and a quest for lifelong learning. Staff continued to support the Principal with the welfare of all students by advising him of the pastoral, behavioural and emotional needs of the children. A Pastoral Care Committee met during the year to discuss school pastoral concerns.

A Pastoral Support Worker was also employed two days per week with a focus on Social Justice issues and initiatives, and to provide some family support. Students were led through a structured program called “MiniVinnies”. Our MiniVinnies Program was supported the local chapter of the St Vincent de Paul Society.

The school’s Outreach Program supported the elderly in our community by providing entertainment for the local sub-Branch of the RSL.

Stage 3 children participated in Cyber-Safety presentations from the Australian Communications and Media Authority to enforce Internet Safety Awareness.

The ‘Seasons for Growth’ program was run in 2014 by the Pastoral Support Worker targeted at children who have experienced grief through loss of a relative or family breakup.

A CatholicCare Counsellor provided counselling for children and supported the running of social skills programs such as “Everyday Peacemakers” (Kindergarten and Year 1) and “Embracing Transition to High School” (Year 6). A “Mindfulness” group was conducted through CatholicCare for selected children from Year 4 to Year 5.

Kindergarten, Year 1, Year 5 and Year 6 students participated in a regular “Buddies” program where older students befriended younger students providing support and assistance to them. Student leadership was encouraged and improved through the children’s participation in the Year 6 Young Leaders’ Day and regular meetings of the Student Leadership Team.

All children’s successes and achievements were recognised and celebrated at assemblies by using our school award system.

The School Wide Positive Behaviours for Learning (SPB4L) Program continued to be developed and implemented to ensure that all children learnt in a safe and supportive environment. Student behaviour was monitored by staff by using a data recording system.

School evacuation and lockdown procedures were practised each Term. Anti-Bullying Programs were taught in classrooms and a school Anti-Bullying Procedure was implemented.
The Life Education program was presented this year with a focus on healthy living.

Staff received training in Anaphylaxis management and Asthma First Aid treatment. The Live Life Well@ School Program promoted the benefits of an active lifestyle and healthy eating across each grade.

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

Stella Maris Primary School at Shellharbour is an educational community where individuals are valued and encouraged to achieve their optimum potential. During 2014 the Stella Maris School motto ‘Reverence the Story of all People’ underpinned all that students learned. Staff members were dedicated and committed to providing each student with quality Catholic learning and teaching while inspiring them to be lifelong-learners. Learning and teaching at Stella Maris complied with all NSW Board of Studies Teaching Educational Standards (BOSTES) requirements.

Curriculum and Pedagogy

Syllabus Implementation

At Stella Maris, all BOSTES Syllabus documents in each of the six Key Learning Areas (KLAs) were implemented. Religious Education was taught using the Diocese of Wollongong Religious Education Syllabus in conjunction with the ‘To Know, Worship and Love” textbook series.
Assessment and Reporting
Assessment and reporting has been an integral part of the teaching and learning process at Stella Maris. The A-E reporting system for Years 1 – 6 was used in 2014. A new reporting format was implemented for mid and end of year reports. This format reflected more accurately the aspects and requirements of the New South Wales Syllabuses for the Australian Curriculum. Parent and teacher Interviews were held after the first semester reports were sent home and Stage 3 students were invited to participate in their interview process. In the first semester, the achievements of students in Kindergarten were reported to parents, at parent and teacher interviews. A formal Kindergarten report was sent home at the end of the year. Throughout the year opportunities were provided for parents and grandparents to visit classrooms and observe their children’s work.

The Best Start Assessment Program was used to assess and monitor Kindergarten and Year 1 students in the areas of Numeracy and Literacy throughout the year. The data collected was used to monitor the progress and formulate learning plans for Kindergarten and Year 1 students.

Teachers began using Learning Continuums in the areas of Literacy and Numeracy. These Continuums were used to monitor student progress and assist teachers in setting learning and teaching plans for all students.

The long-term monitoring of discontinued Reading Recovery students continued to be a priority in Year 2 to Year 6 during 2014.

The results of the National Assessment Plan for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) were analysed by staff and used for planning future learning experiences for students in literacy and numeracy.

Integration
At Stella Maris, integration across a variety of KLAs was encouraged in order to effectively achieve student outcomes. Whenever possible, activities were planned to enhance classroom learning e.g. excursions, incursions and guest speakers.

Technology Supporting Learning
The use of Information, Communication and Learning Technologies (ICLT) were embedded within classroom practice from K-6. The school continued to use Skwirk, blogs and Study Ladder interactive programs to support learning and teaching. New resources such as Smartboards were purchased, while iPads were given to all staff, along with relevant Professional Development.

Cross Curriculum
Literacy Strategies
The importance of literacy learning continued to be highly valued, especially as teachers
worked on implementing the New South Wales Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum: English. The elements of the daily English Block provided the framework for literacy development from Kindergarten to Year 6. The literacy needs of students were met in the classroom through a variety of strategies. Class teachers and School Support Officers worked together to support student learning. All students were involved in the Premier’s Reading Challenge promoting the importance of reading. New reading materials were purchased for a number of classes throughout the school and a Literacy Support Teacher provided extra assistance in reading and writing.

**Numeracy Strategies**

Improvement in student Numeracy learning continued to be a high priority, with teachers implementing the New South Wales Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum: Mathematics. The school continued to develop the skills of mathematical thinking, understanding, competence and confidence of all students. The daily Mathematics Block provided opportunities to encourage student engagement and enjoyment in the development of numeracy skills. Maintaining and improving classroom resources was a priority.

**Indigenous Perspective**

Indigenous Education was integrated within the teaching of Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE) throughout the school. An Indigenous Education Officer worked with teachers and classes to emphasize Indigenous perspectives across the curriculum.

**Other**

To promote the appreciation of different cultures within our Australian society, Indonesian language and culture was taught to all students in Years 1 to 6.

**Meeting the Needs of all Students**

**Diversifying Learning**

As part of the School Review and Improvement (SRI) process, improvement in pedagogical practice was a priority. Staff continued to develop a better understanding of student learning needs. Teachers collaboratively planned their learning and teaching programs to ensure maximum benefit for students.

Teachers implemented a range of strategies and technologies in order to cater for the individual learning styles of students. Staff used visual cues, social stories and schedules to help provide scaffolding for students.

In order to enhance learning throughout the school, teachers explicitly taught expected student behaviours. The focus for SPB4L this year was on areas outside the classroom.

Year 1 students identified as needing extra support with reading and writing participated in the Reading Recovery Program.
Gifted Education
Some of our gifted students were given an opportunity to participate in an enrichment morning as the Southern Illawarra Catholic Schools (SICS) each took a turn in hosting student extension mornings. The theme in 2014 was Religious Education and Creative Arts.

Special Education Needs
Individual Plans were designed and maintained for students who have specific learning needs. These plans are developmental and involved setting individualised goals and learning targets to meet the needs of the student. Each semester, parents met with the class teacher to develop goals which met the specific needs of each student. School Support Officers assisted in implementing activities to achieve planned goals.

A Transition to School Program was provided for Kindergarten students commencing school in 2015. Students participated in a three-day program to help them become familiar with the demands and routines of school life.

Parent nights helped to support parents who wished to understand how and what their children were learning at school. Meetings took place in Terms 2, 3 and 4. These meetings provided opportunities for parents to learn about the approach that the teachers use when teaching English and Mathematics. This enhanced learning experiences at home, as parents were more confident when working with their child.

Expanding Learning Opportunities
Competition
The following opportunities were offered to students: Premier’s Reading Challenge, Diocesan ‘Christmas Story’ Art Exhibition, Diocesan Public Speaking Competition, University of New South Wales International Competitions and Assessments for Schools (in English, Writing, Spelling, Mathematics, Computer Skills and Science). Students in Stage 3 participated in the University of Wollongong Science Competition.

Many students also participated in weekly Chess games, with a school team being chosen to represent Stella Maris at a Southern Illawarra Catholic Schools Chess Competition, which Stella Maris also hosted.

Sport
The school conducted three major sports carnivals during the school year. These carnivals were Swimming, Cross-Country and Athletics. Students, staff and parents were actively involved in these carnivals. Student representation was achieved at Diocesan, MacKillop and State levels. At the Diocesan Sports Awards Ceremony, one student was recognised for his special sporting achievements. Many students eagerly participated in Gala Days in AFL, Rugby League, Netball and Soccer. Children also participated in the NSW Catholic Schools Basketball
Challenge, which this year was held in the Shellharbour area.

**Public Speaking**
Many students participated in class Public Speaking. Stage 3 students competed in a school competition. Winning students were selected to represent the school at the Regional and then the Diocese of Wollongong Public Speaking Competition.

**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**
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.

Overall students performed better in Literacy than Numeracy. Year 5 students performed well in reading, spelling, grammar and punctuation. Year 3 students performed well in writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation. The small percentage of students who were identified as not meeting the National Minimum Standard had already been identified by the school and those students are being targeted for extra support.

**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.
### NAPLAN 2014: % in Bands

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<th></th>
<th>YEAR 3</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bands 1 and 2</td>
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<td>Bands 5 and 6</td>
<td>Bands 3 and 4</td>
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<tr>
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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) are achieving AT the NMS. Students in all other Bands are achieving ABOVE the NMS.

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Parent, Student and Staff Satisfaction

All families in the school received a parent survey. A total of 226 were issued however only a small number were returned completed. This was the first year we have circulated surveys electronically, so this fact may account for a lower response rate than we have had previously. While recognising these limitations, the majority of survey responses for all questions, fell in the Strongly Agree and Agree categories. This was especially the case in relation to teaching about the Catholic tradition, opportunities for parent involvement and recognising that teachers are genuinely interested in the welfare of students. Parents responded that students are being challenged to maximise their learning outcomes, that the school strives to meet individual learning needs and that the school provides a safe and supportive environment. Parents also indicated that the school effectively communicates information about activities and events.

There were 192 Student surveys returned from Years K-6 and again the overwhelming majority of responses were in the Strongly Agree and Agree categories. These responses indicated students feel they understand their rights and responsibilities, recognise that teachers encourage them to learn to the best of their ability, and help them understand their Catholic faith more fully. Students see staff as being approachable, feel safe at school and believe there are sporting and other activities readily available to them.

We had 15 staff surveys returned with almost all responses in the Strongly Agree and Agree categories. This was especially so with respect to Catholic tradition, students understanding of their rights and responsibilities, and providing information to parents about student progress. They also indicated staff feel the school provides a safe and supportive environment, challenges students to maximise their learning and strives to meet the individual needs of students.