Annual School Report
2014
About This Report

St Michael’s Catholic Primary School, Thirroul is registered by the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) 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 Action Plans.

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 BOSTES NSW requirements for Registration.

This Report complements and is supplementary to school newsletters and other regular communications. Following its submission to the BOSTES, the Report will be presented to the Parent Body and be available on the school’s website by 30 June 2015.

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

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Thirroul NSW 2515
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Fax: (02) 4268 1482
Email: info@smtdow.catholic.edu.au
Website: www.smtdow.catholic.edu.au

Parish Priest: Fr Ken Café

Principal: Danny Sykes
Date: 10 December 2014
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

There have been many exciting events occur throughout the year at St Michael’s, with one of the highlights being the inaugural student leadership expo, highlighting how the school has integrated “The Leader In Me” program into the school’s curriculum and the Catholic school setting. 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

It has really been another action-packed year and all that the P&F committee has achieved is not possible without the ongoing commitment, countless hours and generosity given by so many volunteers and the wider school community. It is all about getting people together and working for the greater good of the school. This was evident when in October this year another hugely successful fete was held. The assistance of volunteers also helped host events such as the annual Grandparents Day, Kinder Orientation Day as well as the annual Mothers’ and Fathers’ Day stalls. This commitment allowed the P&F to contribute to many worthwhile projects.

This year the P&F worked on providing better access to information and worked hard on updating this detail on the P&F page of the school website. A focus was also placed on providing better ways of communicating to the wider school community.

The P&F’s financial contributions included library resources and additional Key Learning Area (KLA) resources to help implement the new Australian Curriculum. There was also the
purchase of 15 iPads, 6 desktops and a variety of technology accessories. This year also saw the purchase and installation of two new wall ovens in the canteen, which will assist canteen volunteers in providing for the students. So as 2014 comes to a close and everyone looks forward to 2015 being the seventy-fifth year of the school, it is with extreme gratitude that, on behalf of the P&F, a big thank you is extended to the whole school community for another successful year.

*Parents and Friends Association, President*

**Student Leadership**

This year has been an extremely productive year for all Year 6 students. Everyone has grown from the ‘Leader in Me’ program and become effective leaders in our school. The year started with the formation of leadership groups, with every group contributing to the organisation of school life. A huge amount of confidence was gained from speaking on a daily basis in front of the school community. Another important aspect of leadership was being involved in “Mini Vinnies” and helping raise money with Crazy Hair Days and Mufti Days. This supported the needy in the community. Together with Thirroul Public School, the ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day ceremonies were held once again this year at the Thirroul RSL Cenotaph. There were many different opportunities to show leadership and much has been achieved through the efforts of students and staff.

*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 K-6 and has a current enrolment of 230 students. 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>2014 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 Primary 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 2014.

**Student Attendance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2014 Attendance</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kinder</td>
<td>95.5%</td>
<td>94.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>95.7%</td>
<td>95.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>94.5%</td>
<td>92.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>97.2%</td>
<td>95.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>94.9%</td>
<td>94.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>95.6%</td>
<td>96.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>94.2%</td>
<td>96.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole school</td>
<td>95.4%</td>
<td>95.0%</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.

Rolls are marked every morning using the School’s 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 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 8 full-time, 9 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>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

**Teacher Attendance and Retention**

The average daily teacher attendance rate for 2014 was 97%. 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 2014 St Michael’s 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. St Michael’s Catholic Primary School whole school development days involving 17 staff. These days focused on:
   - collaborative planning and policy review;
   - Google suite of applications; and
   - staff spirituality day which explored personality types using the Enneagram.

B. Other professional learning activities provided at school level including CEO run courses:
   - Professional Development Planning and Review (PDPR)- (11 staff);
   - Literacy and Numeracy Continuums- (9 staff);
   - 1:1 iPads- (2 staff); and
   - Australian Curriculum- (11 staff).

The average expenditure by the school on professional learning per staff member was $316.

In addition, professional learning opportunities were provided by the Catholic Education Office with an additional average expenditure per staff member of $1556.

Catholic Life & Religious Education

St Michael’s Catholic Primary School is an authentic Catholic Primary School. This is evidenced by the close relationship between the Parish Priest, the school community and parishioners in a supporting environment. The school celebrates and maintains links with the Josephite Order who established the school in 1940. A strong focus is placed on Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop and her devotion to God as a role model for the staff and students. The school community strives towards living and working within these values.

St Michael’s Catholic Primary School is called to be members of a community of God’s people, journeying together and sharing the Christian Life. The school’s Vision Statement, challenges staff to inspire excellence in learning, leading and living the faith. The Catholic values upheld in this vision are integrated across the curriculum. Religious Education is the pinnacle point of focus within the school and is taught daily and integrated in all aspects of daily life. The Diocese of Wollongong Religious Education curriculum is the endorsed curriculum for all grades from Kindergarten to Year 6.

The liturgical and prayer life, as part of the Religious Education of the students, is the core purpose. The school community comes together each morning to pray in addition to Years 2 – 6 attending Mass with the Parish once a term. 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 an End of Year
School Mass. In addition, Liturgies of the Word were held for Ash Wednesday, Catholic Schools Week, Mission Month 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 participated with students from other schools in a Year 6 Mass with Bishop Peter, which was held at Good Samaritan Catholic Primary School, Fairy Meadow. The school participated and led commemoration services for ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day, at Thirroul Cenotaph with Thirroul Public School.

As a school founded by the Sisters of St Joseph, the traditions are kept alive through social outreach incentives. Through 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, food and toiletries through a broad range of whole school activities. In Term 1 the sixty-three students involved in Mini Vinnies led the school through the collection of toiletries for the homeless and needy in the Illawarra area. As a result the school was able to fill 100 toiletry bags valued at around $8 a bag, which were distributed immediately. In Term 2 as part of the St Vincent de Paul Winter Appeal, the students organised to ‘Fill the St Vincent de Paul Store’ with tinned food, noodle cups, muesli bars and warm bedding. In addition, the Mini Vinnies organised three cupcake stalls where they raised $730, which was used to purchase forty-five doonas.

This year the children continued their connection with the global community through raising money for Caritas and Mission Month. These opportunities developed the children’s understanding of social justice issues. During October, the school supported the missions in Jamaica. The week commenced with a Liturgy of the Word. Through a fund-raising event and classroom donation boxes the children and their families raised $310.

The whole school community continued to model their Catholic values by supporting special fundraising activities including the Surf Life Saving - Boardies Day ($324) and Project Compassion ($185). 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 year concluded with a large St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal.

The school supported the Parish Sacramental Programs. The school, catechists and parents worked together to prepare children for the Sacraments of Penance, First Communion and Confirmation.

Efforts were made during the year to connect with Catholic families and maximise their participation in the school. The school provided material, which focused on faith formation for parents and community members in the newsletter each week.

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 during the Spirituality Day held at the school, where staff explored their personality types through using the Enneagram as a resource.
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 twenty-eight Year 4 students who sat the Religious Literacy Assessment Workbook (Part A) on 25 August 2014 and twenty-eight completed the Extended Task (Part B). The Extended Task was based on the Unit: Mary, Mother of God: First Among the Saints and was completed during the first half of Term 3.

The performance of each student was described as developing, achieving or extending.

St Michael’s Catholic Parish Primary School achieved pleasing results in the 2014 Religious Literacy Assessment, especially in the Part B component. St Michael’s performance in Part A was slightly above the Diocesan average, whilst performance in Part B was significantly above the Diocesan average. The overall combination of both Part A and B placed St Michael’s above the Diocesan average.

Students showed a high level of performance in their knowledge of the religious tradition. This high level of performance was particularly noticeable in their responses to questions based on:

- explaining an image of God from the Scriptures;
- identifying some saints and recalling how they loved and served others;
- knowledge of Jesus and His teachings;
- the liturgical year; and
- the Commandments and relating them to their own life.

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:

- understand the Sacrament of Penance; and
- recall the events of Holy Week focussing on the Stations of the Cross.

Part B, The Extended Task consisted of one main task with four components, the focus derived from the Year 4 unit Mary, Mother of God: First Among the Saints. Students planned, drafted and put considerable time and effort into their project. Students found this task to be a most valuable and challenging learning experience. Students were enthusiastic and produced some excellent products including works of art, IT presentations, storybooks, posters, and sculptures.

For Part A, 7% of students were placed in the developing band, 78% in the achieving band and 15% in the extending band for Religious Literacy.

For Part B, 0% of students were placed in the developing band, 54% in the achieving band and 46% in the extending band for Religious Literacy.
Overall, 4% of students were placed in the developing band, 59% in the achieving band and 37% in the extending band for Religious Literacy.

**School Review and Improvement**

School Review and Improvement (SRI) is an on-going 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**
  
  1.2 Religious Education
  Goal: The focus was on assisting teachers in the design of quality Religious Education assessment tasks.

- **Key Area 2: Students and Their Learning**
  
  2.4 integration of information and communication technology (ICT)
  Goal: The implementation of 1:1 iPad technology in the Year 5 classrooms.

- **Key Area 3: Pedagogy**
  
  3.1 Curriculum Provisions
  Goal: The staff gained a greater understanding of the Australian Curriculum, particularly in English and Mathematics.

- **Key Area 3: Pedagogy**
  
  3.4 Planning, Programming and Evaluation
  Goal: The school built up its resources in English and Mathematics to successfully support the implementation of the Australian Curriculum.

- **Key Area 3: Pedagogy**
  
  3.5 Assessment
  Goal: The staff was involved in creating well-designed, differentiated assessment tasks in all Key Learning Areas.

- **Key Area 3: Pedagogy**
  
  3.7 Professional Learning
Goal: The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) standards were used to establish an improved Personal Development Planning and Review (PDPR) process.

- **Key Area 5: Resources, Finances and Facilities**
  
  5.1 Information, Communications and Learning Technologies (ICLT) Resources

  Goal: A high priority was placed on Professional Development in ICLT, to support the effective implementation of iPad technology into the school.

**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

  Goal: Working with the Parish to create effective structures that encourage parent involvement in the religious education of their children.

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

  Goal: Data will be used consistently by teachers to track, monitor and review student progress and to inform the teaching and learning cycle.

- **Key Area 2: Students and Their Learning**
  
  2.3 Reporting Student Achievement

  Goal: Students will be involved in the ongoing cycle of assessment, evaluation and reporting.

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

  Goal: Students who are deemed to be at risk will be supported by a network which identifies and addresses their needs.

- **Key Area 3: Pedagogy**
  
  3.7 Professional Learning

  Goal: A culture of quality teaching using the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) standards and an improved PDPR process will be developed (continued from 2014).

- **Key Area 5: Resources, Finances and Facilities**
  
  5.3 Environmental Stewardship

  Goal: A whole-school approach to environmental stewardship will be adopted.
Key Area 6 Parents, Partnership, Consultation and Communication

6.3 Linkages with the wider community
Goal: The local community will be invited to become involved with ‘The Leader in Me’ student leadership program.

Financial Summary

During 2014 the school purchased fifteen iPads for the school library and six desktop computers for the Kindergarten, Year 1 and Year 2 classrooms. This project was financed with the assistance of our P&F Association. In the latter part of the year the P&F also contributed funds for the purchase of Australian Curriculum, KLA resources and library resources. These resources will be purchased early in 2015. There were a number of large maintenance projects carried out during 2014 which included replacement carpet in three classrooms, major roofing repairs, ongoing tree maintenance, an upgrade of the school PA system and the installation of a new AV system in the McCarthy Centre. These projects were financed with the assistance of St Michael’s Parish School Enhancement and Debt Servicing Obligation (SEDSO) funds.

The following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for St Michael’s Catholic Primary School, Thirroul for the year ended 31 December 2014. This data is taken from the 2014 financial return to the Australian Government, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.
Student Welfare

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 continued implementation of ‘The Leader in Me’ program. In Term 4, Peer Support groups were conducted with the special focus placed on being optimistic. The Year 6 students formed leadership groups in the following areas: public speaking, the environment, fundraising, 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 Year 5 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 many ways including via the school newsletter and at assemblies. An Awards Assembly was held each Friday to celebrate individual student success. All children had the opportunity to earn a range of awards from Superstar Awards through to a St Michael’s Blue Medallion.

Students who were seen to be regularly living *The 7 Habits* were presented with leadership awards.

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* is 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 2014.

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**

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**Introduction**

St Michael’s Catholic Primary School is a learning community dedicated to continual improvement and ensuring quality learning and teaching is delivered across all KLAS. With the implementation of the new syllabus in English and Mathematics this year there was a targeted approach and focus on quality pedagogy and practice, highlighting the staff’s commitment to their profession and the students in their care. There was a high level of professional collaboration across all stages of learning, creating consistency in practice and understanding.

**Curriculum and Pedagogy**

**Syllabus implementation**

The BOSTES 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.

This year saw the formal implementation of the BOSTES Australian Curriculum for English and Mathematics. It was a year of consolidation as teachers used the new syllabus to implement quality learning and teaching. There was ongoing professional development to ensure teachers were comfortable and familiar with the new structure and features of the curriculum. 2015 will see the implementation of the new BOSTES Australian Curriculum for Science and Technology.

**Assessment and reporting**

In 2014 St Michael’s continued to implement assessment and reporting procedures, which complied with Federal Government requirements. This year the school implemented reporting procedures using the web based program Sentral in accordance with Diocesan requirements. Student reports contained the common grade scale with comment options for Religious Education, English and Mathematics, as well as a general comment. Reports were distributed at the end of Term 2 and Term 4 with parent/teacher interviews held in early Term 3 and an opportunity provided at the end of Term 4.
At St Michael’s assessment was one of the School Review and Improvement priority areas for 2014. Several staff meetings were held which focused on quality assessment practices and in particular around assessment for learning. The variety of strategies explored, were implemented in classrooms across all stages. Through the use of data notebooks, students were encouraged to self-assess their own learning and set goals which were reflective of their learning journey.

**Integration**
Integration across the KLAs continued to be an effective strategy to address multiple outcomes and make explicit connections with the student’s learning. Authentic integration at St Michael’s was implemented across the grades and in particular in Science and Technology, Human Society and Its Environment and English. This enabled teachers to provide a variety of quality learning experiences that were connected to real life situations.

**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 2014, the following hardware was purchased: six iMacs and fifteen iPads.

Staff also attended the following conferences and courses: the Slide 2 Learn Conference, Apple iTunes U Course, CEO 1:1 iPad course (5 days) and Innovative Classrooms Course (5 days).

This year was a year of firsts with the launch of the 1:1 iPad program for the Year 5 learners. Students participated in a one-day boot camp facilitated by Education Officers from CEO. Staff received support through regular onsite professional development, in-class team teaching support and the opportunity to attend offsite professional development. The ICLT coordinator ensured that all policies, user agreements and procedures were in place and adhered to. These policies were recently reviewed to ensure their relevancy for 2015.

2014 saw the school embrace a new initiative with the introduction of iPad technology into the library for all students in Kindergarten to Year 6. Students used iPads within the library environment to research and create products using a variety of educational apps.

St Michael’s continued to place emphasis on Digital Citizenship. This was achieved by all teachers including a digital citizenship component into their parent information evenings and all students participated in digital citizenship lessons each term. The Australian Communication & Media Authority facilitated student, parent and staff workshops during 2014. ICLT will continue to be a key initiative at St Michael’s to enhance communication, collaboration and content creation for staff, students and parents.
Cross Curriculum

Literacy strategies
Literacy continued to be a significant focus area at St Michael’s in 2014. There were continued professional learning opportunities for staff focusing on quality pedagogy. This professional learning was aligned with the introduction of the new English Syllabus ensuring the integrity of the syllabus was maintained. This year there was a deliberate focus on using the Literacy Continuum to monitor and track student progress in literacy. Staff had multiple opportunities to participate in targeted professional learning to support them in understanding the continuum and being able to use the continuum effectively.

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 activity 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 shortlisted books.

In 2014 St Michael’s once again participated in the New South Wales (NSW) Premier’s Reading Challenge. The 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 2014. The introduction of the new syllabus provided opportunities for staff to reflect on current practices and refine pedagogy. Staff continued to collaboratively share experiences and learnings through staff and stage meetings, ensuring quality learning and teaching across the school.

This year saw a preliminary introduction to the Numeracy Continuum. Targeted professional learning was provided that explored the principles underpinning the continuum and how it aligns with quality practice in the classroom.

Meeting the needs of all students
Gifted Education
The Gifted Education coordinator has worked collaboratively with classroom teachers during 2014 to support students in maximising their potential. This has involved teachers in Years 1 – 6 developing individual education plans for identified students, sharing these plans with relevant stakeholders and submitting the documentation twice annually. During Term 2, 2014, all Year 3 students sat the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) Acer General Ability Test (AGAT). Identified students 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 2014 included:

- self-directed learning (personal interest projects);
- rich questioning techniques;
- open-ended tasks;
- tiering of tasks;
- self-paced instruction; 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 in the Diocese of Wollongong (SPLICED). This involved students working through challenging tasks in an online environment.

During 2014, a small group of Year 5 students also participated in a Mathematics extension program. This program was held every Tuesday morning during Term 4 at Holy Spirit College, Bellambi.

Students were also offered other opportunities:

- University of New South Wales (UNSW) Competitions;
- Maths Challenge;
- weekend courses at St George Girl’s High School;
- holiday workshops at the University Of Wollongong (UOW); and
- other competitions.

Students in both Stage 2 and 3 have participated in self-directed learning experiences (personal interest projects) where they have identified areas of interest, devised open-ended rich questions and then set about researching their interest area and creating a presentation. This culminated in students showcasing their project to their peers and receiving feedback from their teachers.

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 2014 St Michael's was involved in a pilot project focusing on the role and responsibilities of a Managing Student Pastoral and Educational Concerns (MSPEC) team. This professional
learning experience provided an opportunity to reflect on current practices and review how
the existing 'Review Committee' will become the MSPEC team. In 2015 this team will monitor
and track behavioural, pastoral and academic needs of the students through scheduled
meetings each term.

Expanding Learning Opportunities

This year St Michael’s has continued 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 Christmas Art Competition and two of our students were
chosen for the finals in Sydney. This resulted in one of the Year 5 students receiving a Highly
Commended Award as part of the Sydney competition.

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.

All students 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
placing third at the Diocesan Carnival. Two 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**

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.

**Student Achievement in Bands**

Year 3 results are reported in Bands 1 to 6 with Band 6 representing the highest achievement and Year 5 results are reported in Bands 3 to 8 with Band 8 representing the highest achievement. **Please Note: Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAPLAN 2014:</th>
<th>YEAR 3</th>
<th>YEAR 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% in Bands</td>
<td>Bands 1 and 2</td>
<td>Bands 3 and 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spelling</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>10%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>School</td>
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<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
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<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Numeracy</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>48%</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.
### NAPLAN 2014: % AT or ABOVE NMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YEAR 3</th>
<th>YEAR 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>90%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Spelling</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>93%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Numeracy</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>School</td>
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<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>93%</td>
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</table>

### Parent, Student and Staff Satisfaction

At the end of the 2014 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 Catholic tradition. They also believed that opportunities were provided for parents to be involved. They confirmed that the school effectively communicated information 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 December one hundred and twenty one 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 whether they felt safe at school. The students agreed that they knew their rights and responsibilities at school. Students also indicated that there were sporting and other activities in which they could become involved in and that their teachers
encouraged them to achieve to the best of their ability. 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 favorably 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.