



St Gerard's Catholic School Carlingford

2007 Annual Report



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1. Message from Key Groups in Our School Community

1.1 Message from the Principal

Religious Dimension

2007 has been a year rich in the celebration of our Faith. The musical and liturgical talent of staff has been utilised to see the demise of pre-recorded music in our whole school celebrations.

Live music from the children and staff has accompanied the singing of designated parts of the Mass. Of particular note is the singing of the Responsorial Psalm led by a talented group of children. The feeling of a committed community embracing its Faith is palpable.

Work has continued on the creation of original pathways in the Diocesan Religious Education Units. The staff has also led Staff Prayer which is held independently of any other meeting. The readings from the coming Sunday's Mass have been a point of reference.

The school has been proud to support the Parish Sacramental Programs by attending meetings and the conferring of the Sacrament.

The school has been very keen to enhance and grow relationships between the school and parish. A goal for St Gerard's School and Our Lady Help of Christians this year was to celebrate the two parishes becoming one parish (with two distinct communities).

This was achieved in many ways.

- The two schools combined in the celebration Mass and community events surrounding the formalisation of the new parish.
- The two schools combined staffs for professional development in Mathematics.
- The kindergarten classes from both schools visited each other and went on excursions together.
- The principals met regularly to share ideas and experiences to enhance the life of their communities.

- The two schools participated in *J Rock*, a junior Rock Eisteddfod challenge for primary schools, and performed at the State Sports Centre Homebush Bay.

Educational Dimension

2007 has been a richly rewarding year in professional development for staff. St Gerard's prides itself on its shared leadership of all aspects of school life. This year in alignment with the Annual Goals the staff formed teams to drive the professional development in the major focus areas of English and Mathematics and the minor focus of Technology and Religious Education.

Building on past years' professional development, staff attended Diocesan led courses and that of outside institutions such as Sydney University. After such input staff met and designed professional development sessions for the staff as a whole which they led in the major and minor focus areas.

Staff development also focused on understanding quality assessment in the Quality Teaching Framework, which has led to greater reflection on assessment tasks for the students.

Thanks to the generosity of the Parents' and Friends' Association (P&F) and school funding the school was able to purchase eleven laptops and in line with the Annual Goals install a wireless network for the Stage Three children and the library.

St Gerard's has performed at a high level in outside academic and sporting competitions and the Basic Skills Tests.

This year a student involved in one of our enrichment programs was awarded a Gold Medal in the Maths Olympiad.

The learning support program from Kindergarten to Year 6 has seen students supported in English and Maths with specific skills programs to target any areas needing development. The success of these programs is evidenced in the results of the Basic Skills and school assessment.



Community Dimension

St Gerard's is blessed with a very supportive parent body. The involvement of the parents in all facets of school life is highly prized by the staff. Parent support in the classroom allows for greater individualised programs for all children and is a great asset to the school.

The support of the P&F has enabled the school to offer social events for all the community. The fundraising of the P&F has enriched the school's resources and enabled us to further grow a rich and supportive learning environment.

The Chesalon program has again flourished this year and the children have developed deep and meaningful relationships with the older residents in the area.

The school was successful in winning valuable prizes in the Westfield competition thanks to the coordination of the competition by the parents.

The maintenance levy contributed by the parents has allowed the upkeep of our beautiful and extensive gardens and lawn.

The receiving of a community grant from the Federal Government has enabled us to enhance the Infants playground with gross motor equipment.

St Gerard's has continued its social justice program with not only fundraising for various groups but education on the plight of needy communities and our responsibilities in our world.

The Principal

1.2 Message from the Parent Body

This year has been a great year for the children and parents of St Gerard's, Carlingford in collaboration with the school.

Although the "newer" school was officially opened last year the building program continued with the P&F and school working to upgrade the school grounds. The significant activity undertaken was the returfing of the upper playground along with re-mulching of the gardens. In addition to the funding provided by the P&F grants were

obtained that allowed for acquisition and installation of playground equipment, a rainwater tank and upgraded seating in the infants play area. This year also saw the final payment on the classroom air conditioning project which started with fundraising planning in 2005.

Funding provided by the P&F also allowed for the purchase of reading books and additional class room computers.

The P&F worked to ensure that our families had plenty of opportunities for involvement within the school. Activities included, but were not limited to, class mums, sacramental programs, canteen, clothing store, discos, J Rock, Mother's and Father's Day stalls, dinner dance and numerous social and sporting events.

The relationship between the P&F Executive and our school Principal, may be best defined as strong and effective and it is with regret and best wishes we acknowledge her decision to retire at the end of the current year. With such a legacy the P&F looks forward to continuing this relationship with our incoming Principal.

President, P&F Association

1.3 Message from the Student Body

St Gerard's is a great school that offers many wonderful opportunities to learn. The teachers work hard to help us develop many different talents.

There are many programs at the school that give us great chances to try new things. These include Chesalon visits, Maths Olympiad, science challenges, reading groups, band and many more.

There are also many sporting opportunities that encourage us to work as a team and be a fair sportsman.

It is not just the captains that show leadership in Year 6; it is the whole grade because they play an important part by being allocated jobs such as library monitors, environmental team.

The way the school works together is fantastic. We all run assemblies, participate



in a Christmas concert at the end of a year and we also worked together to enter *J Rock*.

Leaving Year 6, we will always remember the many memories shared and the great opportunities given to us at St Gerards.

School Captains 2007



2. School Profile

2.1 Introduction

St Gerard's Catholic Primary School caters for boys and girls from Kindergarten to Year 6 in the Diocese of Broken Bay. The school is located in Carlingford and shares North Rocks Road with the local state secondary school and primary school. St Gerard's is on the border of the Broken Bay Diocese and the Parramatta Diocese and is in a very well established suburb. The majority of the children are drawn from St Gerard's parish and the local area.

The school is tucked away behind the church and has the use of ovals and a variety of open playing spaces.

The school is very important in the life of the parish and community. The school enjoys a positive relationship with St Gerard's Parish. The school has a reputation for excellence in teaching and learning and a welcoming and supportive parent community.

2.2 Student Profile

The following information describes the student profile for 2007:

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Indigenous	Total
162	177	33	0	340

*Language background other than English

Enrolments have increased and the school has grown from eleven classes in 2003 (262 students) to fourteen classes (335 students enrolled in 2007).

2.3 Enrolment Policy

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established an [Enrolment Policy](#)† which is implemented by all systemic schools in the Diocese.

The implementation of this policy is monitored by the Catholic Schools Office.

The Enrolment Committee at St Gerard's consists of the parish priest, the Principal

and two members of the Pastoral Council who are parents at the school.

†Copies of this policy and other policies in this report may be obtained from the Catholic Schools Office website at: <http://www.cso.brokenbay.catholic.edu.au/resources/index.html> or by contacting the Catholic Schools Office.

2.4 Staff Profile

The school Leadership team consists of:

The School Principal, Assistant Principal, Religious Education Co-Coordinator, Co-Coordinator 2 and Co-Coordinator 1.

The staff are also in leadership positions with Key Learning Areas and major focus teams.

The school has a learning support teacher, a new arrivals teacher (when required), two administrative officers, five teachers' assistants, specialist physical education and music teachers.

The NSW government requires that this report details the number of teachers in each of the following categories:

- have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines
- have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications
- do not have qualifications as described in (a) or (b) but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context. Such teachers must have been employed:
 - to 'teach' in NSW before 1 October 2004 (either on a permanent, casual or temporary basis), and
 - as a 'teacher' during the last five (5) years in a permanent, casual or temporary capacity.

a	b	c	Total
23	0	0	23



2.5 Teacher Attendance and Retention Rates

The average teacher attendance rate during 2007 was 95.3%. This figure does not include teachers on planned leave.

The teacher retention rate from 2006 to 2007 was 92.3%.

2.6 Teacher Satisfaction

Staff at St Gerard's expressed their deep satisfaction with the professional development offered in 2007. The opportunities not only to deepen their knowledge of curriculum areas was valued, but the opportunity for leadership within the staff was appreciated as was the support that went into staff leadership.

The staff felt that they had gained valuable skills and learnt new strategies that they could implement in the classroom.

The focus on staff prayer was another area of deep satisfaction. Staff prayer was separated from all meetings and given its own timetabled allocation of time before school on Friday.

The different formats were also appreciated from led reflections on the upcoming Sunday's readings to individual prayer and reflection.

Staff also valued the bond that was forged with our sister school, Our Lady Help of Christians, Epping. The joint celebrations as Epping and Carlingford became one parish were valued as was the joining of the two schools for professional development in mathematics and *J Rock*. Kindergarten classes from both schools also enjoyed excursions together.

Other highlights of the year for staff were the whole school liturgies and the live music, the introduction of the Visual Arts Award, parent involvement and the new infants playground.

2.7 Student Attendance

The average student attendance rate for 2007 was 95.7%.

2.8 Student Satisfaction

In conjunction with the feast day of St Gerard, the children wrote about why they value their school:

- St Gerard's means a lot to me. The physical surrounds of St Gerard's are wonderful. Our school children are very lucky. Some schools don't have a strip of grass to play on but we have heaps of grass at St Gerard's. This is where the seniors play.
- Our school environment is wonderful; we have lovely gardens and plants.
- We also have play equipment and even a painted chess board for us to practise our chess skills on.
- St Gerard's is a great place to be in. We have air conditioning for hot days and lots of computers which help us collect great information.
- The thing I like most about St Gerard's is the friends and teachers all of whom support us every day.
- From young smiling children to wise understanding teachers, a place filled with learning and fun.
- A school where people come together as a happy community.
- St Gerard's makes us remember all the good times we've had.
- The many teachers that taught us so much, the good friends we've made over the years.
- The playground has had so many changes, but what doesn't change is the fun we all have at recess and lunch.
- St Gerard's is a place filled with happy people that work hard to make everyone feel important and every person is kind to one another.
- St Gerard's means a lot to all of us, and we will miss it when we leave.



3. Catholic Life and Mission

3.1 Catholic Heritage

On March 3rd 1963 Carlingford was decreed a separate parish from Epping and Father Nolan was appointed Parish Priest. The new parish was named St Gerard Majella and in September 1964 the first school building of three classrooms and offices was opened. The Sisters of Mercy remained at Carlingford until 1980. The first lay principal was appointed in 1981.

The current church was completed in 1972 and Father Nolan continued as Parish Priest until his retirement in 1978. Father Egan was appointed in his place and worked in the parish for the next twenty-one years. In 2000 Father Colin Blayney was appointed Parish Priest of both Epping and Carlingford.

St Gerard's has a strong legacy of academic achievement and genuine commitment and support from a close parent community. The school lives a true partnership with the parents in every facet of our academic and spiritual development.

The new Vision and Mission Statement is the school's compass for the future where each person can genuinely live the values espoused and that staff, students and parents can articulate the beliefs and hopes of the community.

Parents express the view that the school is an extension of family life and support the excellence in teaching and learning and reflective practice that all staff strive for.

3.2 Liturgical Life

The liturgical life of the school is rich in many areas. The parish priest encourages full participation of children and staff at whole school masses. The children demonstrate great joy as they practise their developing faith that is nurtured by staff and family.

One of the highlights of the year is the classroom masses. This is an opportunity for children, parents and the class teacher to share intimately in the celebration of the Eucharist.

There is high parent participation at all liturgical celebrations. Advent, Lent, Year 6 celebrations and the Feast of St Gerard are very special liturgical events in the life of the school.

Mothers' and Father's Day liturgies have become an important part of our liturgical life and by the large attendance by parents and grandparents (over 200) these celebrations are highly valued by the community.

Children have prayer circles in their classroom and all classes prepare prayer for the whole school assemblies.

Staff prayer is held weekly and is a highly valued sacred moment in the busy life of the staff.

3.3 The School in the Life of the Parish and Diocese

The school values links with St Gerard's parish. The parish Youth Coordinator worked with the Religious Education Coordinator and planned reflection days with the senior students.

The school supports the parish sacramental program with units from the new diocesan syllabus, by informing parents of this support and by the presence of the parish Sacramental Coordinator in the school and at Orientation nights. Staff attend special events in the parish such as First Eucharist and Confirmation.

This year was a significant year in the life of the school and parish as Epping and Carlingford became one parish (with two distinct communities). A wonderful day of liturgical and social events was held as well as a combined mass for both schools to attend together.

The Principal is a member of the Parish Pastoral Council.

The staff attend and value the Diocesan Mass to begin each school year.

The children in Year 6 attend the Cluster Mass.



Children lead an active life in the parish as parents prepare the monthly children's mass.

The children are junior altar servers and they serve the school and the parish.

The children are prepared for the sacraments by a dedicated group of parents as part of the parish sacramental program.

St Gerard's values its link with nearby sister school, Our Lady Help of Christians at Epping, and the Religious Education Coordinators of both schools have begun to plan liturgical celebrations as a team.

3.4 Religious Education Curriculum

In 2004 the new Religious Education syllabus was refined, accepted and launched in February 2005. The staff, led by the Religious Education Coordinator and the Catholic Schools Office, used the modules and have begun to tailor teaching and learning experiences for the needs of specific classes.

This year staff have continued to work with the Diocese on strengthening the religious education modules.

The Religious Education Coordinator subscribed to resources on the internet and used the staff page on Cenet (CASTnet) to offer further experiences and resources in Religious Education.

3.5 Catholic Worldview

The school newsletter, *Contact*, endeavours to present ideas and reflections to the community couched in the Catholic Faith.

The children sponsor an overseas child each year.

The children prepare class liturgies with a special liturgy held at the Year 6 camp.

Students actively support Project Compassion, Cystic Fibrosis and Christmas Child.

The P&F raised funds to donate to Catholic Missions.

A group of children visit Chesalon Nursing Home twice a term.

Visiting speakers shared experiences of working in overseas missions.

Children participate in Mission Week.

The social justice team coordinated the raising of funds for Candela in Peru.

We also heard progress about the women and children in this community.

3.6 Parent Participation

Parents are acknowledged at St Gerard's as partners in the education of their children particularly in the area of faith development and are highly valued for their support and participation.

The Faith Development team on the P&F liaise between the P&F and the Parish.

The children are prepared for the sacraments by a dedicated group of parents as part of the parish sacramental program.

Parents were involved in the development of the Vision and Mission Statement.

Feedback to the school during this process indicates that the parents value the partnership formed with the school staff. They see this partnership as genuine, open and supportive. The articulation of Gospel values by the school and the living of these values is highly appreciated.

The parents support the depth of education their children receive, and value the community spirit engendered at St Gerard's.

3.7 Professional Learning in Catholic Life and Mission

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established a policy on the [Professional Requirements for the Accreditation of Teachers of Religious Education](#) which is implemented by all systemic schools in the Diocese.

With leadership from the Religious Education Coordinator and Diocesan education officers, staff explored the new syllabus in Religious Education.

Ten teachers have completed the Certificate in Religious Education.

Two teachers are studying with the Broken Bay Institute.



All classroom teachers are accredited to teach Religious Education or are involved in the process as they are accredited in other dioceses.



4. Pastoral Care

4.1 Diocesan Policies

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established [Pastoral Care](#) and [Student Discipline](#) Policies which are implemented by all schools in the Diocese.

The implementation of these policies is monitored by the Catholic Schools Office.

4.2 School Implementation of Diocesan Policy

While having the guidance of the diocesan policies, St Gerard's recognises the need to revisit policies and procedures in the area of pastoral care. Work was completed in 2006 on a detailed student management plan to give students, parents and staff clear guidelines to support any student experiencing difficulty meeting the expectations of the community in this area.

4.3 Pastoral Care of Families

St Gerard's strives to build community in every possible way. The care of families is crucial to an authentic functioning school.

There are formal and informal supports for our families.

The North Shore Cluster has a school counsellor who works with families and children. St Gerard's was very fortunate to have this service in 2007 and to access support from other members of this team when any family in the school required immediate assistance.

Parents meet with the Principal when issues arise or when they need specific support, or they speak to their child's teacher who will liaise with the Principal.

Parents are sometimes referred to the Parish Counsellor, Centacare or other appropriate agencies.

Parents also support each other through the network of class mothers. Parents also support each other when illness impacts on a child or a member of the family.

4.4 2007 Initiatives

The revisiting of the school's Vision and Mission statement gave the opportunity for the staff, senior children and parents to focus on who we are and what are the values that are important to this community.

The statement is in every child's Religion book and is a point of reference for acceptable behaviour at St Gerard's.

The Principal's Award has been instigated for living our Vision and Mission Statement.

It is hoped that by the end of their time at St Gerard's, the children will be able to articulate these beliefs.

The school strives to see each child as an individual learner so the teaching and learning programs reflect this belief by catering for the differing needs of students by:

- differentiation of class programs;
- school camps;
- learning support programs;
- programs for gifted students;
- life education;
- celebrations of achievements with Honour and Curriculum Awards.

Acknowledgement of achievements at school and in the wider community are posted in the newsletter or at the assembly.

4.5 Resolving Issues

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established a [Complaints Handling Policy](#) which is implemented by all schools in the Diocese.

The implementation of this policy is monitored by the Catholic Schools Office.



5. Excellence in Teaching and Learning

5.1 Curriculum Overview

St Gerard's curriculum is driven by the six Key Learning Areas mandated by the Board of Studies. These are English, Mathematics, Human Society and Its Environment, Science and Technology, Personal Development, Health and Physical Education and Creative and Practical Arts.

As a Catholic school, St Gerard's is privileged to educate the children in their faith and we follow the new syllabus for the Diocese of Broken Bay in Religious Education.

St Gerard's builds on this foundation and offers the students a much wider educational experience than is mandated.

5.2 Approach to Teaching and Learning

St Gerard's views every child as an individual learner with specific needs.

The Vision and Mission Statement states that the school community journeys together as learners, celebrates uniqueness, and strives to use our gifts to the best of our ability.

This is reflected in the teaching programs and many extra programs that the school employs to help each child reach their potential.

Children are encouraged to employ their natural learning style to achieve outcomes.

To further this approach the staff undertook a course in 2005 that examined whole brain learning by starting with the teacher and their learning preferences and exploring how this impacts on their classroom. This was further developed in 2007.

Education is celebrated by the whole community and individuals are recognised in every Key Learning Area.

5.3 Significant Initiatives

St Gerard's has reassessed the learning support programs and seeks to identify children's specific learning needs early in Stage One.

Parents are contacted and a cycle employed to support the child and family with individual learning programs.

A skills program for primary students was introduced and refined using two teacher's assistants to upskill children who need support in specific areas (such as spelling, grammar, number facts, fractions).

Homework was reviewed and a combination of set tasks and open-ended learning with choice further developed. This has gained momentum with the introduction of CEnet where class pages offer children the opportunities for online learning.

The program for gifted students has been expanded and refined. Extension programs are offered in reading, writing, mathematics, science, sport, visual arts and interpersonal skills.

The policy was updated in 2004 and is constantly revisited and appendices added. Staff were inserviced further in the needs and characteristics of gifted students.

CEnet training and the technology skills of the staff were again given priority with formal sessions in extra meetings before school ("Techy Breckies"). These were voluntary but wholly supported by staff. Class pages have been established enabling students to complete homework online. The Information, Communication and Learning Technologies (ICLT) team was re-established and supported staff with training in CEnet.

The Basic Skills Test (BST) results were analysed and used to inform quality teaching and learning experiences for the children.

Staff analysed the data to inform future programs.

The new assessment and reporting cycle was modified due to the Government's mandatory reporting system. As portfolios were discontinued, "living portfolios" were introduced twice a year. The classrooms are open for the parents to share in their child's learning in situ.

In line with our Annual Goals in 2007 the staff focused on excellence in English and Mathematics.



Staff teams were formed and key staff members (numeracy and literacy facilitators) undertook professional development and used this knowledge to run professional development at a school level.

5.4 Student Achievement

Literacy – Reading and Language

In **Year 3**, 2007 there were 48 students who sat for the Basic Skills test (BST). The table below shows the percentage of students in Year 3 who achieved each band at the school and also in the State.

	School	State
Band 5	50	19
Band 4	29	28
Band 3	13	26
Band 2	8	15
Band 1	0	11

79% of our students achieved the top two bands compared to 47% across the State (Bands 4 and 5).

The following table compares Year 3 student performance in Literacy (Reading and Language) to statewide performance and illustrates trends in student performance over time. Since 2001 the average scaled score for St Gerard's has been consistently above the state performance.

Year	School	State
2001	57.1	50.6
2002	58.0	50.6
2003	56.1	50.6
2004	56.1	50.5
2005	57.2	50.8
2006	55.4	50.7
2007	57.2	51.2

Writing

In **Year 3**, 2007 there were 48 students who sat for the Writing Basic Skills Test (BST). The table below shows the percentage of students in Year 3 who achieved each band at the school and also in the State.

	School	State
Band 5	35	16
Band 4	48	32
Band 3	15	32
Band 2	2	12
Band 1	0	8

83% of our students achieved the top two bands compared to 48% across the State (Bands 4 and 5).

The following table compares Year 3 student performance in Writing to statewide performance and illustrates trends in student performance over time. Since 2001 the average scaled score for St Gerard's has consistently been above the state average.

Year	School	State
2001	54.3	49.0
2002	57.5	51.5
2003	54.9	51.1
2004	55.7	51.2
2005	54.7	50.1
2006	55.5	50.2
2007	55.7	50.8

Literacy – Reading and Language

In **Year 5**, 2007 there were 48 students who sat for the Basic Skills test (BST). The table below shows the percentage of students in Year 5 who achieved each band at both the school and also in the State.

	School	State
Band 6	48	27
Band 5	33	26
Band 4	17	26
Band 3	2	14
Band 2	0	5
Band 1	0	1

81% of our students achieved the top two bands compared to 53% across the State (Bands 5 and 6).



The following table compares Year 5 student performance in Literacy (Reading and Language) to statewide performance and illustrates trends in student performance over time. Since 2001 the average scaled score for St Gerard's has consistently been above the state average.

Year	School	State
2001	62.9	57.1
2002	63.9	57.8
2003	61.1	57.5
2004	66.0	57.4
2005	62.7	57.0
2006	63.7	57.3
2007	62.1	57.5

Writing

In **Year 5**, 2007 there were 48 students who sat for the Writing Basic Skills Test (BST). The table below shows the percentage of students in Year 5 who achieved each band at the school and also in the State.

	School	State
Band 6	47	23
Band 5	40	32
Band 4	11	28
Band 3	2	12
Band 2	0	2
Band 1	0	0

87% of our students achieved the top two bands compared to 55% across the State (Bands 5 and 6).

The following table compares Year 5 student performance in Writing to statewide performance and illustrates trends in student performance over time. Since 2001 the average scaled score for St Gerard's has consistently been above the state average.

Year	School	State
2001	59.5	56.3
2002	62.9	57.1
2003	60.0	56.4
2004	64.6	56.6
2005	60.7	56.2
2006	62.9	56.7
2007	61.3	57.2

The University of NSW Competitions are voluntary.

In the University of New South Wales English Competition 71 children participated: St Gerard's received 11 Distinctions and 24 Credits.

In the University of NSW Writing Competition, 46 students participated: St Gerard's received 1 High Distinction, 13 Distinctions and 12 Credits.

In the NSW University Competition in Spelling, 60 students participated: St Gerard's received 1 High Distinction, 13 Distinctions and 18 Credits.

St Gerard's has a rich classroom program in literacy, and children are given opportunities to develop individual tasks as well as to be part of explicit teaching in reading and writing skills. St Gerard's is developing program differentiation to further cater for the individual student.

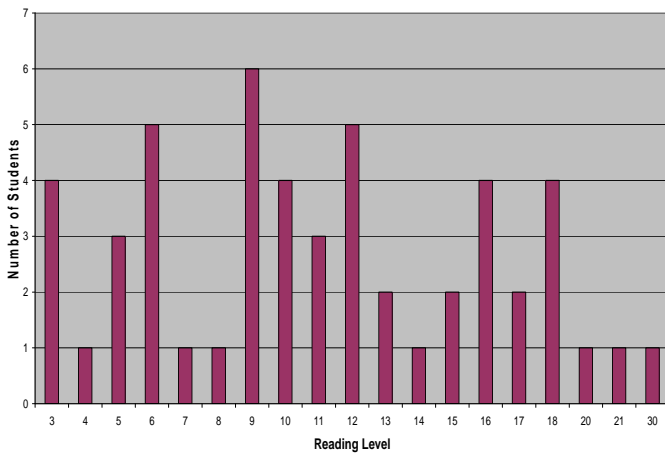
All teachers in Early Stage One and Stage One are trained in the Observation Survey which is a diagnostic tool which identifies what the students can do, and still need to learn to do, in order to read at their developmental stage. A large emphasis was placed on supporting children in Early Stage One with extra staff training and more explicit programming in the area of literacy.

This year in Kindergarten we continued our support of students acquiring early literacy skills. Both kindergarten classes were grouped and children placed in cross grade literacy groups to maximise support for all children.



This year, instead of only using the PM Benchmarks Kit (which we found did not give a rigorous enough view of our children's progress), we used a variety of texts in different formats.

Kindergarten Reading Level 2007



St Gerard's is proud of its public speaking program (CAPS) which runs across Years 2 to 6.

In addition to classroom programs, St Gerard's offers individual literacy plans for children experiencing difficulties in literacy and the support of teacher's assistants.

For students exhibiting talent in literacy as well as a varied classroom program, the school offers extension in Reader's Circle and a special writing program for aspiring authors.

Numeracy

In numeracy, Year 5 has again recorded exceptional results. The results are well above state and diocesan trends and reflect support for all students with our extensive gifted programs and learning support skills groups for students needing extra support.

In **Year 3**, 2007 there were 48 students who sat for the Basic Skills test (BST). The table below shows the percentage of students in Year 3 who achieved each band at the school and also in the State.

	School	State
Band 5	40	19
Band 4	33	27
Band 3	19	26
Band 2	6	20
Band 1	2	9

73% of our students achieved the top two bands compared to 46% across the State (Bands 4 and 5).

The following table compares Year 3 student performance in Numeracy to statewide performance and illustrates trends in student performance over time. Since 2001 the average scaled score for St Gerard's has consistently been above the state average.

Year	School	State
2001	55.9	52.4
2002	66.2	53
2003	60.7	52.8
2004	56.0	52.3
2005	58.3	53.6
2006	54.7	53.3
2007	59.1	53.1

In **Year 5**, 2007 there were 48 students who sat for the Basic Skills test (BST). The table below shows the percentage of students in Year 5 who achieved each band at both the school and also in the State.

	School	State
Band 6	56	33
Band 5	19	22
Band 4	19	24
Band 3	4	15
Band 2	2	6
Band 1	0	1

75% of our students achieved the top two bands compared to 55% across the State (Bands 5 and 6).

The following table compares Year 5 student performance in Numeracy to statewide performance and illustrates trends in student



performance over time. Since 2001 the average scaled score for St Gerard's has consistently been above the state average.

Year	School	State
2001	68.8	60.3
2002	69.2	60.2
2003	63.9	60.0
2004	69.6	60.7
2005	69.3	60.4
2006	70.6	61.5
2007	67.5	61.9

The scores in the table below indicate the average growth achieved by students who sat for the BST in 2005 as Year 3 students and again in 2007 as Year 5 students, in Literacy (Reading and Language), Writing and Numeracy at St Gerard's and for the same cohort of students in the State. The expected growth in BST scores is between 6-7.

Average Growth achieved by students who sat for the BST in 2005 as Year 3 students and again in 2007 as Year 5 students.

2007	School	State
Literacy (Reading and Language)	6.23	6.81
Writing	6.69	7.17
Numeracy	10.40	8.45

As the results in Year 3 have been consistently above state average the scope for growth is limited because of the previous high scores.

The Commonwealth Government has developed National benchmarks that describe the minimum acceptable standards for Year 3 and 5 students for Reading, Writing and Numeracy.

The following two tables outline the:

Percentage of Students in Year 3 who have surpassed the National Benchmarks since the school has had access to this data

	Reading %	Writing %	Numeracy %
2004	100	n/a	100
2005	100	100	100
2006	100	100	100
2007	100	100	100

Percentage of Students in Year 5 who have surpassed the National Benchmarks since the school has had access to this data.

	Reading %	Writing %	Numeracy %
2004	100	n/a	97
2005	100	100	100
2006	100	100	100
2007	98	98	94

In the University of New South Wales Mathematics Competition, 82 students participated: St Gerard's received 2 High Distinctions, 17 Distinctions and 16 Credits.

In the Maths Olympiad 1 child received the Gold medal for a perfect score, 3 children scored in the top 10% and 5 scored in the top 25%.

In the NSW University Science Competition, 47 students participated: St Gerard's received 1 High Distinction, 5 Distinctions and 16 Credits.

In the NSW University Competition for Computers, 50 students participated: St Gerard's received 3 High Distinctions, 6 Distinctions and 15 Credits.

Mathematics recovery sessions are offered for children in Years 3 to 6 who have experienced difficulties in developing certain mathematical concepts.

In Term 4 all children in the school are part of a diagnostic testing program. The tests administered are: Kindergarten, Reading Level, Word Vocabulary and Fry's Sight Words.

Year 1: Reading Level, Waddington Reading and Spelling.

Year 2: Reading Level, Waddington, South Australia Spelling, Ravens (to identify gifted students) and Diagnostic Maths in each strand.

Year 3: Pretos (spelling recognition in context), Torch (comprehension) South Australian Spelling.

Year 4: Pretos, Torch, SA Spelling Ravens and Maths Diagnostic.

Year 5: Pretos, Torch SA Spelling and Maths Diagnostic.



Year 6: Pretos, Torch, SA Spelling and Maths Diagnostic.

This data is gathered and analysed and used to inform class placement for the following year and to offer another form of assessment of learning outcomes. This information also guides the learning support teacher in the placement of children on special programs which target gaps in skill development or conversely extension programs for students working above class expectations.

5.5 Information, Communication and Learning Technologies (ICLT)

All teachers participated in a range of ICLT activities in 2007.

Opportunities were offered to staff in:

- CEnet training appropriate to their level of expertise. This was offered to all staff as a 'Techy Breaky'; staff gathered for breakfast at 7.30a.m. and then moved into ICLT training. Staff indicated in advance what training was needed and two sessions would run simultaneously. Two sessions per term were timetabled
- ICLT use of technology to enhance learning at a staff meeting (all staff)
- sharing technology tips at a Briefing meeting
- training in SINA (one staff member)
- training in ICLT (one staff member)
- training to use the school's intranet site (two staff members).

Across the year a number of purchases were made to support the use of technology in the school. In 2007 we purchased two data projectors, eight laptops, four monitors (LCD), one portable PA system, one drop down screen and fifteen digital cameras.

5.6 Professional Learning

All teachers participated in a range of professional learning activities in 2007.

Opportunities were offered to staff in:

- The Mathematics Classroom (all staff)
- Adult Faith Formation (all staff)

- Literacy development (two staff)
- Instructional Reading (all staff)
- Instructional Writing (all staff)
- Mathematics (two staff)
- Literacy (two staff)
- CPR (all staff)
- Diocesan Adult Faith Development (all staff)
- Ministry for Teachers (one staff)
- OH&S (all staff)
- Assessment (all staff)
- Training in the use of BST data and its application to teaching and learning programs (two staff)
- Training of staff in the Observation Survey (two staff)
- Teacher's Assistants training (five staff)
- Teaching students whose second language is English (one staff)
- Training in CEnet, ICDL, myclasses and Podcasting (all staff)
- Circles training (two staff)
- Visual Arts training (all staff)
- early literacy (six staff);
- Speech and language (all staff)
- Social justice (all staff)
- CPR (all staff)
- Anaphylaxis training (all staff)
- Payroll and finance training (two staff).

The average expenditure on professional learning per teacher in 2007 was \$767.



6. Extracurricular Program

St Gerard's has a school choir which participates in local eisteddfods and performs at special functions. In 2007 the choir increased in size and performed at whole school events. The choir was awarded fourth place in their first eisteddfod

The senior and junior bands expanded in 2007, with 60 children having specialist lessons. They perform at school functions as well as special musical evenings for their parents.

St Gerard's offers chess coaching by the NSW Academy of Chess. The school also participated in the Chess Competition.

Talented mathematicians participate in the Maths Olympiad and problem solving groups.

Children who are talented writers participate in creative writing workshops.

Six Reader's Circles offer texts to talented students weekly.

A group of children who exhibit excellent interpersonal skills visit the Chesalon Aged Care Facility and develop a relationship with a selected resident. Skills training is provided before the program begins each year.

For the first time St Gerard's (with Our Lady Help of Christians) entered J Rock. This was an exciting and rewarding venture.

A range of sporting opportunities are offered to the children:

- specialist physical education
- soccer
- netball
- rugby league
- cricket
- gross motor
- cross country
- athletics
- swimming

The Science Challenge is offered to children exhibiting talent in this area.

The school offers an extensive Public Speaking Program and Competition known as CAPS (*Children and Public Speaking*). This program is for Years 2 to 6. A school final is held and medals awarded.

Many opportunities are offered to our students in leadership:

- camps
- assemblies
- local government award
- input into the canteen menu
- buddy system
- hospitality
- liturgies
- honour and curriculum and sporting awards
- fundraising
- social justice.



7. Strategic Initiatives

7.1 2007 Priorities and Achievements

The main areas in the 2007 Annual Plan were:

Catholic Life and Mission

Continue to live the Vision and Mission Statement of the school and articulate our beliefs.

The statement is accessible to children and is placed in every child's Religion book so that as the years progress the children will be able to articulate their school's Vision and Mission. A new award was instigated to recognise children who strive to live this Vision.

Developing best practice in teaching and learning in reference to the new modules is being developed in Religious Education.

Staff are becoming more reflective after inservicing and the widening of strategies in the implementation of the new Broken Bay curriculum and participation in staff development.

Curriculum Development

A major focus was to continue to strengthen the special needs program by developing individual plans for children and improving communication with parents. The employment of Teacher's Assistants was beneficial in delivering a more explicit program of assistance to children experiencing difficulties in literacy and numeracy.

The formation of an IT Committee was instrumental in equipping staff with skills and confidence to use CEnet to gain information and develop effective teaching and learning experiences using technology.

Quality Teaching and Learning

Professional learning in analysis of the BST results was carried out with staff who were able to use this information to inform teaching and learning programs.

A focus on English and Mathematics to ensure excellence in these Key Learning

Areas and reinvigorate staff skills in teaching in these areas.

Staff worked on differentiation both within the class program and programs to meet the needs of all students.

Staff development in "whole brain learning" saw theory put into practice in differentiation of programs and integrated units of work.

The Quality Teaching Framework enabled the development of a shared understanding of quality assessment.

Work was continued to ensure congruence between the canteen menu and the healthy eating habits contained in the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education syllabus.

7.2 2008 Priorities and Challenges

Annual Goals – A Synopsis

These will be drawn from the Strategic Plan.

Catholic Life and Mission

- To develop greater awareness in the area of social justice and work with a neighbouring school in a joint research project in the area of social justice and technology.
- To increase the school's global outreach.
- To continue building parish and school links.
- To develop best practice in implementing the new Religious Education modules.
- To further develop a "lived" Vision and Mission.
- To deepen the religious literacy and faith formation of all staff.
- To continue to build a formal relationship with Our Lady Help of Christians, Epping through combined staff development and student activities.

Curriculum Development

- To access professional development that focuses on improved learning outcomes for all students.



- To develop a literacy and numeracy facilitator within the staff.
- To explore explicit strategies in teaching mathematics and literacy.
- To further develop strategies in using emerging technologies to enhance quality learning.
- To strengthen cross-curricular perspectives, especially Aboriginal and multicultural.
- To further develop staff skills in Visual Arts.

Quality Teaching and Learning

- Develop and implement a coherent framework to guide quality teaching and learning.
- To critically examine strategies in teaching mathematics and reading.
- To continue work on developing integrated units of work with a whole brain perspective.
- To further develop staff skills in the teaching of Visual Arts.
- Explore the use of higher order thinking skills.

Information, Communication and Learning Technologies

- Further develop the roles of the ICLT team.
- Continue professional learning for staff in CEnet.
- Develop the use of information technology to foster quality teaching and learning experiences.
- Develop information pages on CEnet, for example, Parent Page.

Pastoral Care and Student Management

- Develop a new policy in line with the Diocesan policy on pastoral care and form a team to drive this development.
- Consult with the community to gain data in the development of a new Pastoral Care Policy.

- Provide leadership experiences for children and staff.

School Buildings and Facilities

- To oversee maintenance of the new grounds and facilities.
- To develop an outdoor learning space.
- To replace the infants seating
- To construct an infants gross motor playground.



8. Parent Participation

8.1 Introduction

Parent participation is one of the great strengths of St Gerard's.

Parents work in classrooms in a variety of Key Learning Areas.

Canteen, clothing pool, lawn mowing and working bees are other practical ways that the parents support this community.

The P&F raise funds for the school and this has enabled the school to resource many Key Learning Areas especially in technology and literacy.

The P&F Executive is divided into the following portfolios:

- President
- Vice President
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Publicity
- Faith Development
- Parent Communication
- Maintenance
- Fund Raising
- Social
- Clothing Pool and Events Signage

The parents publish a newsletter every week that becomes part of the school newsletter.

Parents welcome new members to the community and hold many social events that focus on the social aspect, rather than on fundraising.

8.2 Parent Satisfaction

Parents feel welcomed and valued. St Gerard's School has a community spirit, a real family feel to it, with parents commenting on the warmth that exists across the parent, teaching and student body.

The faith development through whole school and class liturgies is appreciated by the parents. The Monday assemblies, class

assemblies and awards systems are positive elements of school life at our school.

Parents were highly supportive of the schools of Carlingford and Epping working closely together as the two parishes combined.

The combining of the two schools for *J Rock* was a highlight for the parents and the quality of the experience and performance for their children was highly valued.

Parents expressed deep satisfaction with the academic and sporting achievements of the school especially the Basic Skills Test results.

Parents valued the commitment of staff to continued personal professional development.

The parents state that "St Gerard's is a unique school where all children are able to receive such high quality education with dedicated staff".



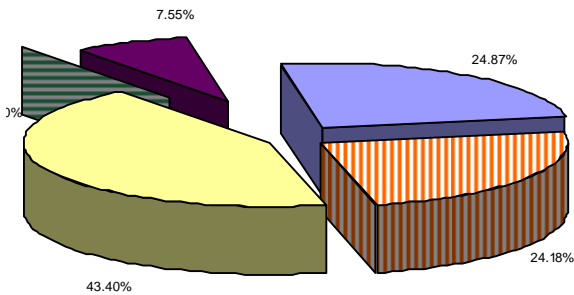
9. Financial Report

Consistent with Board of Studies requirements, financial income and expenditure for this school is shown in the graphs below.

Diocesan system financial reporting is found in the Diocese of Broken Bay Catholic Schools Office Annual Report.

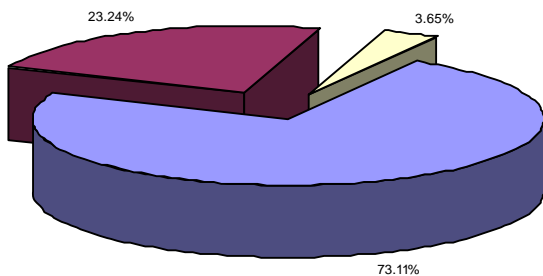
Income

- Fees and Other Private Income
- State Government Funds
- Commonwealth Recurrent Grants
- Government Capital Grants
- Other Capital Income



Expenditure

- Salaries, Allowances and Related Costs
- Non salary Expenses
- Capital Expenditure



The contents of this annual report have been validated by the School's consultant, Diann Hynes.