

St Kieran's Catholic School Manly Vale

2008 Annual Report



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1. Message from Key Groups in Our School Community

1.1 Message from the Principal

This Annual Report highlights significant initiatives, achievements and celebrations as a school community and provides insights into the strategic direction for the future.

In 2008 World Youth Day was a major focus for the school and parish community both in the preparation for, and lead up to, this significant international event as well as the week of hosting pilgrims at the school site and the need for teachers to stay as site managers overnight.

The main learning focus of staff professional development was centred on authentic learning as it pertained to integration. This was achieved through involvement with the Australian Catholic University's Leaders Transforming Learning and Learners (LTLL) project. The school actively participated in the Peninsula Community of Schools project, now in its third year, committed to promoting quality teaching and learning for gifted and able students across the network of schools on the Peninsula.

The student toilet block was refurbished with consultation given by parents, staff and students in the layout and design elements of this. The staff outdoor area off the staff room was restored to allow for community groups, such as the School Board, and staff to make use of the area and kitchen facilities.

Special thanks to all within the community for their prayers, support and encouragement during my absence due to illness. The seemingly smooth transition of key staff into leadership positions is testament to the leadership density on staff.

1.2 Message from the Parent Body

The link between parish and school community strengthened further this year with the School Board initiating, planning and implementing two significant activities with resounding success. Firstly, the Family Prayer Box during the Advent liturgical season. All families within the school were given objects, prayer sheets and activities that could be used to build upon a sacred space and to foster prayer at home. Secondly, a Christmas Carols evening occurred that involved teachers and students Kindergarten to Year 6 presenting the Nativity through drama and song and where parents and parish community were invited to come with picnic blanket to join in this form of prayer.

The Parents' and Friends' Association (P&F) continued to support the school through fundraising events that assisted in the purchase of interactive whiteboards and software for classrooms, literacy resources to support the integrated units in Kindergarten to Year 6 as well as maintenance of school grounds through a major landscape project.

1.3 Message from the Student Body

In 2008 students continued to contribute to the vibrant life of the school and be actively involved as part of classroom and extracurricular learning opportunities.

This year, Year 5 took part in Peer Support Training with Year 6 and became co-leaders when delivering the program for Terms 2 and 3. Senior students also participated in many community events such as World Youth Day 08, Anzac Day ceremonies, Environment Day and representative sporting events. A pink mufti day was held in Term 4 to raise money and awareness for the Cancer Council as a few within the school community were specifically affected by this disease.



2. School Profile

2.1 Introduction

St Kieran's Catholic School, Manly Vale, has two streams from Kindergarten to Year 6, for both boys and girls. It is located within the Broken Bay Diocese on Sydney's northern beaches. Students are primarily drawn from the areas of Manly Vale, Brookvale, Allambie and Allambie Heights, North Manly, Balgowlah and Seaforth.

The school enjoys a very positive profile in the community due to its reputation for excellence in teaching and learning and for its strong focus on parent education, pastoral care and community involvement.

2.2 Student Profile

The following information describes the student profile for 2008:

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Indigenous	Total
191	188	41	2	379

*Language background other than English

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.

†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 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
20	0	0	20

2.5 Teacher Attendance and Retention Rates

The average teacher attendance rate during 2008 was 97.1%. This figure does not include teachers on planned leave.



The teacher retention rate from 2007 to 2008 was 87.5%.

2.6 Teacher Satisfaction

Teaching staff expressed great satisfaction with the professional learning provided throughout the year in well planned regularly scheduled meetings. The continued building of collegiality and the support given through 90 minute grade meetings and curriculum planning sessions with grade partners was well received.

Teachers felt positive about their World Youth Day involvement and the opportunity to contribute to this faith experience. Teacher involvement as hosts to pilgrims, together with being part of a vibrant parish community during this time was a particularly satisfying aspect of the WYD event.

2.7 Student Attendance

The average student attendance rate for 2008 was 95%.

2.8 Student Satisfaction

Students across the grades have a number of positive things to say about life as students at St Kieran's:

"I liked Book Club because the activities were really fun and you really got to know your book." Year 4 girl

"I liked learning about the human body because it's good to know what you're made of." Year 4 boy

"We love how our playground is big and that there are lots of children to play with. We love Shared Space because it is fun. We like St Kieran's because we have an interactive whiteboard! We like how we learn new things in Maths, Reading and Writing and Religion time. We are lucky to have special teachers for PE, Creative Arts and Library. We like how we can borrow books from the library." Year 1

"Year 5 camp was fun because we got to stay in cabins overnight. It was also a massive learning curve for me and it turned out to be a very enjoyable year." Year 5 boy

"In Year 5 I enjoyed learning about media and making our own ads for a company because it was fun watching yourself and others on the videos we made." Year 5 girl

"It was exciting and we felt responsible in our roles as leaders to assist with the planning for the new toilet block." Year 6 leaders

"St Kieran's is like a seatbelt; it is a very safe place." Year 2 girl

"We have a very beautiful Church, a fantastic playground and new toilets." Year 3 girl

"I like how the school is really welcoming and that we have good teachers and friends. We do active things." Year 3 boy

"I will always remember my buddy who was a good friend to me." Kindergarten girl

"I liked the fun Maths game we played." Kindergarten boy



3. Catholic Life and Mission

3.1 Catholic Heritage

St Kieran's Catholic School is part of the Parish of North Harbour. St Kieran's was opened in January 1953 with thirty children under the leadership of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan Order.

The Augustinian priests have had responsibility for the parish from its beginnings and their strong sense of friendship and welcome pervades the community.

At St Kieran's school the gospel message is witnessed and lived, continuing to promote and to form students in Catholic discipleship. Social justice teams, leadership opportunities, formation and outreach programs offer students, teachers and parents experiences in following Jesus as members of the Catholic community.

The major highlight of the year was the preparation and celebration of World Youth Day as a parish. The school hosted over 180 pilgrims for the duration of the celebrations and the parish was a centre of catechesis in which parents and staff took part. Another highlight was a visiting Christian singer from the USA, Jesse Manibusan, who presented a series of workshops which involved our senior students, leadership team and our families.

3.2 Religious Life of the School

St Kieran's Catholic School has a rich liturgical life. Teachers work collaboratively together in liturgical teams, with the assistance of the REC, to plan liturgies for feast and significant days. This year the parish Youth and Family coordinator assisted the staff in preparing for liturgical celebrations.

As a parish school community liturgical celebrations included: Sorry Day, Ash Wednesday, Catholic Schools Week, Holy Week, Pentecost, Feast of Assumption, St Augustine and St Kieran. Liturgies during the seasons of Lent and Advent were presented when parents and friends were able to join with us and celebrate as a community. The whole school final Mass acknowledged our graduating Year 6 students.

Throughout the year students from Years 3 – 6 attended the parish morning Eucharist on a weekly basis. Family prayer, followed by Reconciliation, was experienced by primary students with an invitation for their families to join them.

Lectio Divina was a focus for Staff Prayer held each fortnight as well as being introduced to the School Board as part of proceedings.

3.3 The School in the Life of the Parish and the Diocese

The school is an integral part of the life of the parish of North Harbour. Each week the Year 6 Liturgy Team, after meeting with the REC, present the week's gospel followed by the parish *Question of the Week* for students in which the teachers follow up in the classroom. The Principal and REC, through the weekly Newsletter, comment on the *Question of the Week* from an adult perspective.

There are family Masses once a month for each grade and there is a strong school choir that sings on these occasions under the assistance of the parish team. Altar servers are trained by parish staff and the parish priest regularly visits classrooms and assists with the RE program of learning.

Our Year 6 students participated in the diocesan cluster Leadership Mass; the Mission Team attended the Mission Mass; while the Liturgy Team celebrated the arrival of the World Youth Day Cross at St Augustine's.

Once again there was a strong commitment by families to the parish Sacramental program, supported by the school through units of work, community prayer and celebration. Sixty children



received the Sacrament of Confirmation and forty-eight made their first Reconciliation and First Eucharist.

Both the Principal and Parish Priest are members of the Parish Council and School Board.

3.4 Catholic Worldview

St Kieran's school presents quality education as an expression of the Catholic Worldview. As a parish school community we seek to offer opportunities to apply that worldview to all aspects of school life, and life outside the school.

In 2008 opportunities existed for students and staff to participate in the Vinnies Street Patrol, distributing food to the homeless in the area. Social justice activities further included raising money from the St Kieran's Day Mini Fete, prepared by the Year 6 Mission Team and teacher mentors, for the Josephite community in Peru. Resources no longer being used in the school were also sent to schools in Peru. The staff's Winter Appeal, "Casual for a Cause", enabled the purchase of sleeping bags for the homeless. Monies were raised throughout the year when Mufti Days were scheduled for the McGrath Cancer Fund and Caritas through Project Compassion.

In 2008 a large proportion of staff were involved in World Youth Day 08 and generously assisted by sleeping at the school as hosts to the many visiting pilgrims. There was no Staff Development Day of spirituality formation as a result of the extra days involved in World Youth Day.

The senior classes, Years 5 and 6, participated in Leadership Training and Reflection Days. These were assisted by the parish family/youth coordinator. The School Board had a spirituality day facilitated by CSO personnel.

3.5 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.



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

In 2008 all full time permanent teaching staff completed the Choice Theory/Reality Therapy/ Lead Management four day basic intensive course which led to greater shared understanding of student discipline issues and management.

During the parent Welcome and Information Night and the new Kindergarten Parents Orientation, the school's Safe School Policy and Pastoral Care practices were shared and communicated to parents.

Discussion within the School Board focused on the need for greater awareness of pastoral care issues within the current school community.

4.3 Pastoral Care of Families

Both formal and informal support structures exist for families within the St Kieran's school community. The class parent network assists in supporting families in times of bereavement, sickness, and the birth of a new baby.

The Learning Assistance Program and Seasons for Growth program continued this year for those students identified by staff and parents who would benefit from participating. The diocesan school counsellor was also available to support school students and families.

The Principal, Assistant Principal, Learning Support Teacher and class teachers all work closely with parents to provide appropriate 'at point of need' assistance and support to students and their families in relation to educational, behavioural, and emotional needs, issues and/or concerns.

4.4 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 Quality Teaching and Learning

At St Kieran's, as a means to communicate the learning needs of all students, teachers meet regularly with the Principal, Assistant Principal and Learning Support teacher, to determine the direction of specific programs of learning to occur in each classroom.

In Term 3, students in Years 2, 3 and 4, were assessed in mathematics and numeracy and for three days a week were organised into four learning ability groups and given explicit instruction on their needs in the Number strand.

As part of the Peninsula Schools initiative, gifted mathematics students in Year 6 participated in a mathematics challenge program with other students across the southern cluster of schools.

Instruction was provided by the mathematics coordinator at the local systemic secondary school for a series of sessions based on the extension work given to students.

'Come on Kids' was a program for identified mathematically gifted and able students in Year 3 and 4 which involved individual work using online programs.

In Terms 1 and 2 the Assistant Principal provided extension for identified talented writers in Year 2.

In Term 4 a program of learning was implemented for those students in Kindergarten to Year 2 identified as at risk of not meeting expected grade benchmarks.

A speech therapist continued working on a language program with specific Kindergarten, Year 1 and 2 children in their classroom. The therapist linked the program to the classroom teaching and learning program enabling staff to develop their skills in catering for specific language needs.

St Kieran's was involved in the LTLL project with Australian Catholic University. The focus of the two-year project is on authentic transformative learning through the development of integrated units Kindergarten to Year 6. The Principal, Assistant Principal and REC attended the program presented by the leadership faculty of ACU, and throughout the year presented directions and innovations to the teaching staff. Staff were further supported with input into planning units of work for each term. The focus for the innovation centred on developing student-centred learning products as a component of each unit of work.

An integrated unit policy was written, together with an adjusted Scope and Sequence, to reflect the integrated program. The policy was presented to staff and implemented as a draft.

Assessment of, for and as learning was explored and developed during professional learning meetings and at a Staff Development Day. A policy on assessment was developed and presented to staff as part of the learning process.

5.2 Student Achievement

2008 was the first year of the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). As a result of this new initiative, several points should be noted:

- A national minimum standard replaces the national benchmark of previous years.
- It is not possible in 2008 to provide comparisons with previous years' data.
- Students who were exempted from a test were deemed not to have met the national minimum standard.
- In the 2008 cohort, there were 53 students in Year 3 and 36 students in Year 5.

Detail on school performance is provided in the following tables where band distributions and percentages of students achieving the national minimum standard are outlined separately for Year 3



and Year 5. In Year 3, the highest band that a student can achieve is Band 6. In Year 5, the highest band that a student can achieve is Band 8.

Year 3 band distributions and % of students at or above national minimum:

		Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6 (+)	% at or above national minimum
Reading	School	4	0	5	17	38	36	96
	National	6.1	12	17.7	23	21.7	17.7	92.1
Writing	School	0	2	6	15	32	45	100
	National	2.9	6.5	15.6	28.7	27.4	17.2	95.4
Spelling	School	4	2	11	36	24	23	96
	National	5.9	10	19	25.9	21.9	15.5	92.4
Grammar & Punctuation	School	2	0	15	6	30	47	98
	National	6.6	10.7	17.3	23.3	21.3	19.1	91.7
Numeracy	School	0	0	19	19	45	17	100
	National	3.3	10.9	22.9	28	20.9	12.4	95.0

It was very pleasing to note that the percentage of students achieving at Band 6 (and at Bands 5 and 6 combined) was higher than the national figures in every test area. It was also pleasing to see that the percentage of students in the lower bands (Bands 1 and 2) was much lower than national figures. In areas of writing and numeracy, 100% of students achieved above the national minimum.

The NAPLAN results at Year 3 indicate that current teaching programs and intervention strategies are working effectively to support student skills and knowledge across all facets of the literacy and numeracy. These approaches will be continued in 2009 with the expectation that students will continue to extend and develop their skills in these critical areas.

Year 5 band distributions and % of students at or above national minimum:

		Band 3 (-)	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6	Band 7	Band 8 (+)	% at or above national minimum
Reading	School	8	0	25	31	8	28	92
	National	7.5	13.6	23.9	26	18.1	9.3	90.9
Writing	School	3	6	11	30	28	22	97
	National	5.9	11.8	25.3	29.3	17.9	8.3	92.5
Spelling	School	8	6	17	22	39	8	92
	National	6.8	12.8	24.9	28.2	18.2	7.6	91.7
Grammar & Punctuation	School	6	8	22	28	17	19	94
	National	6.6	11	21.2	26.4	19.9	13.4	91.9
Numeracy	School	3	11	31	25	11	19	97
	National	5.9	17.4	28.9	25.7	13.9	6.6	92.6

The results in Year 5 were similarly pleasing. Again, Band 7 and 8 results (combined) in each test area are above the national figures. An area of relative weakness appears to be spelling. While still better than national figures, 8% of students achieved below the national minimum and only 8% achieved at the highest band. To improve student skills in this area, a targeted spelling program was immediately implemented in Year 5 and will continue in Year 6. Results in numeracy have indicated the need to identify at risk students and implement programs with the view to improving achievement in this area.



5.3 Extracurricular Activities

St Kieran's Catholic School is committed to offering a variety of opportunities to cater for student needs and interests. Students are able to take part in a variety of activities, offered by teachers as part of the teacher leadership program, which included sport, drama, dance, music, art, public speaking and lunchtime Kids Club.

5.4 Professional Learning

The average expenditure on professional learning, per teacher, in 2008 was \$1,110.

The focus on professional learning for 2008 was on developing a shared understanding of quality assessment practices, specifically in the areas of literacy and numeracy. The Leadership Team attended the Stephen Covey workshop on "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People." Two members of the Leadership Team completed the Middle Managers course.

Five teachers attended the Choice Theory/Reality Therapy/Lead Management course for developing quality relationships in the classrooms, outlining the cognitive theory of behaviour and behaviour management.

The ICLT facilitator continued to attend network meetings as well as leading staff in using the interactive whiteboards.

One staff member attended the Leading Curriculum Change program focusing on science and technology negotiated by the cluster.



6. Strategic Initiatives

6.1 2008 Priorities and Achievements

Science and technology: The Strategic Plan 2007-2010 highlighted the need for a curriculum cycle of development prioritising science and technology as the greatest need. One staff member attended the cluster course in leading curriculum change and management through science in preparation for implementation in 2009.

Whole staff shared understanding of assessment for, as and of learning in assessment practices resulting in a draft assessment policy.

The identified need for retention of students in Years 5 and 6 led to an information session for parents and initiatives from the School Board.

Participation in the ACU LTLL project led to a focus on quality teaching and learning via the integrated unit curriculum.

6.2 2009 Priorities and Challenges

There will be a focus on the science and technology curriculum. Staff development days and professional learning meetings as well as classroom support and planning will be a feature of updating skills in teaching science.

The LTLL project will continue to focus on student choice and transformative learning by implementing a stage in the inquiry learning process entitled, 'Student-Centred Learning Products'.

As part of the Peninsula Learning Community of Schools project, numeracy will be a focus through a shared SDD and professional learning meetings with schools in the southern cluster.

The government announcement of the Building Education Revolution initiative will present opportunities and challenges for the school community in the development and maintenance of school facilities.



7. Parent Participation

7.1 Introduction

St Kieran's is fortunate to have a very supportive and committed parent body. The School Board continued to assist the school's leadership through the working party that looked at what issues needed to be addressed in the retention of boys in the senior classes. This resulted in a parent information night which focused on what St Kieran's has to offer all students within the senior grades. This information evening was well attended by parents in the lower and middle grades.

Parent involvement throughout the year continued by helping within the classroom and on excursions, school canteen, and whole-school planned activities and celebrations. Parents were keen to assist the parish school community in World Youth Day celebrations by volunteering for various roles and attending World Youth Day events.

Parents play an active and vital role as members of the various P&F committees that build community and develop a spirit of friendship and welcome to all within the school community. Parents supported social events organised by the class parent network, as well as participated in parent education opportunities. Fundraising activities were also supported and classroom resources to enable and enhance student learning were purchased.

7.2 Parent Satisfaction

Parent numbers increased at P&F meetings when opportunities were provided for parent education such as the integrated curriculum, NAPLAN feedback and how teachers are using the interactive whiteboards in their classrooms. Parents welcomed the invitation to the school each term for an Open Day where the students were able to share their learning with their parents and families.

Parents also appreciated the opportunity to be consulted and be involved directly in the school enhancement project which saw the installation of the new toilet block and new landscaping around the school. The Carols Night was greatly appreciated as an opportunity to participate in and build community spirit. Parents commented on how much they valued the family prayer boxes as it provided a resource for families to gather and pray in their homes.

In 2008 the 'Dad's in School' committee organised a very successful Father's Day Breakfast which was very well attended and greatly appreciated by our fathers and their children.

Parents are keen to be involved in the development of the school's website. However, while the launch was planned for Term 4 2008, this did not eventuate.

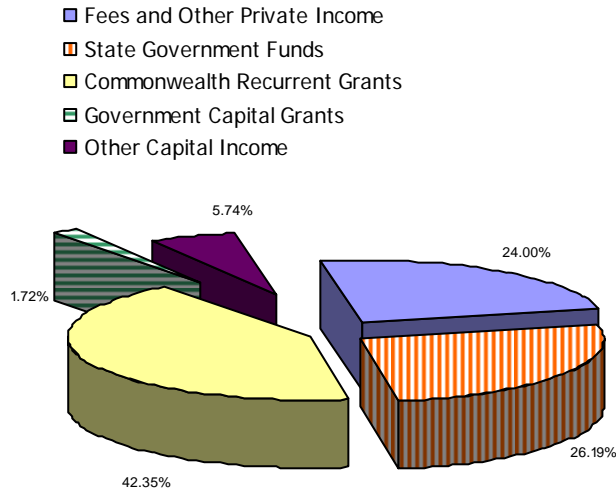


8. Financial Report

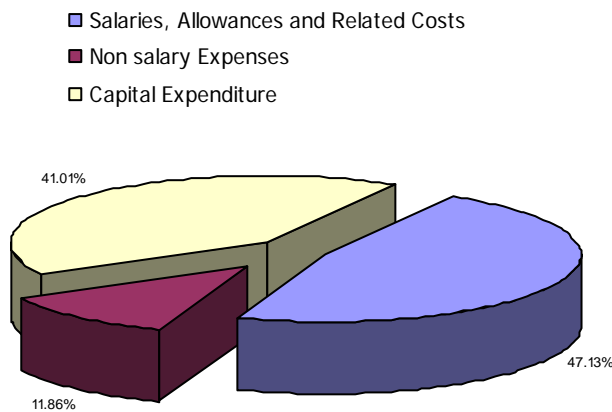
Consistent with Board of Studies requirements, financial income and expenditure for this school is shown in the graphs below.

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

Income



Expenditure



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