

# Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic School Waitara

## 2008 Annual Report



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## 1. Message from Key Groups in Our School Community

### 1.1 Message from the Principal

As 2008 was my second year as principal at Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic School, I believed that it would be a less hectic year. I am now firmly convinced that schools are always hectic places. The energy which staff bring to their teaching roles at Our Lady of the Rosary is amazing.

2008 marked the commencement of the new Strategic Plan. Progress was made in each of the five goal areas:

- Catholic Life and Mission
- Pastoral Care and Community
- Curriculum Teaching and Learning/ Professional Learning
- Strategic Leadership
- Facilities, Resources and Finances

The initiatives undertaken will be detailed in the body of the report.

### 1.2 Message from the Parent Body

2008 has been another very successful year for the Parents' and Friends' Association (P&F). Working in close partnership with the Principal, we achieved all of the targets we set three years ago in our strategic plan. For many of the volunteers on our Committee the three-year maximum term comes to an end. However, the new Committee elected to take us into the next generation is strong and will build on the legacy achievements.

The achievements over the last three years and 2008 in particular are summarised:

- Air conditioning has been completed in all class rooms and the library.
- The traditional Fete was relaunched into a successful Spring Fair and involved over 200 volunteers.
- A successful Melbourne Cup Raffle was held.
- Approval was granted to proceed with a P&F Levy from 2009, easing the demands on ad hoc fundraising activities and achieving greater equity in parent contributions. Thus, the P&F is in a sound financial position.
- Approval was granted to proceed with the construction of a playground.
- The P&F was made more relevant to our parent community with an average attendance of over twenty people, with some meetings having in excess of thirty people.

An opportunity for the incoming Leadership Team next year is to develop greater community involvement across the Cathedral community.

On behalf of the 2008 P&F Team we would like to thank the Principal and her team for their tremendous support and to our parent community who helped to make 2008 not only a memorable year but also fun.

If anyone is interested in becoming involved with the P&F in 2009, and beyond, jump at the chance to make a difference.

*2008 President, P&F*



### **1.3 Message from the Student Body**

Throughout our time at Our Lady of the Rosary we have learnt a lot. Our biggest project for 2008 was researching and naming our new colour houses after important people from our school's history. We designed logos for each colour house. Our gift to the school was a set of banners displaying the logo for each colour house.

Many of the leadership teams contributed to significant projects throughout the year. The liturgy team was able to support the Religious Education Co-ordinator in her role. The Librarian was assisted in the library by the library team who also accompanied her on a purchasing trip to Beecroft Children's Bookshop. The Special Needs teacher worked with the environment team to co-ordinate Clean-up Australia Day and submit the National Solar Schools Grant application.

*2008 School Captains*



## 2. School Profile

### 2.1 Introduction

Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic School Waitara is a Kindergarten to Year 6 primary school located in the Broken Bay Diocese on Sydney's North Shore.

The school was established by the Sisters of Mercy in 1898. In 1991, the school was re-located from the Pacific Highway to the new parish site in Yardley Avenue. Students are primarily drawn from the parishes of Waitara and Our Lady Queen of Peace, Normanhurst.

The school enjoys a positive profile in the community with a reputation for excellence in learning and teaching and a strong focus on pastoral care.

2008 was an exciting year for Our Lady of the Rosary as the Parish of Waitara became the Cathedral Parish for the Diocese of Broken Bay.

### 2.2 Student Profile

The following information describes the student profile for 2008:

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Indigenous	Total
205	178	45	1	383

\*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 96.2%. This figure does not include teachers on planned leave.

The teacher retention rate from 2007 to 2008 was 80.0%. At the end of 2007 a number of staff left Our Lady of the Rosary for a range of reasons:

- relocating closer to home
- promotion
- leaving the profession.

## 2.6 Teacher Satisfaction

The 2008 teacher satisfaction survey responses indicated strong satisfaction on the part of all respondents to the learning opportunities, school life and the values project in 2008. Staff rated the professional development engaged in, and the developing collaborative culture of the school, as prominent highlights of the year.

## 2.7 Student Attendance

The average student attendance rate for 2008 was 94.5%.

## 2.8 Student Satisfaction

The Student Representative Council (SRC) is the key student representative body at Our Lady of the Rosary. In 2008 the SRC reported that the students would like to:

- receive some acknowledgement of their achievements at a whole school level
- have more community events as a whole school
- engage in across-grade events.

In response to this, a process was undertaken involving staff in deciding what acknowledgments were possible in order to build the student body self-esteem. Birthday certificates were commenced early in the year and learning acknowledgements will commence in 2009 as a direct result of this initiative.

During the year we initiated whole school celebrations with a book character parade for Book Week; a whole school book trivia competition for Literacy Week and a lunch time disco run by the SRC. These events were prominent in the students' reflections on the year.

Our Lady of the Rosary held a Values Day to culminate the term of work engaged in during Term 2. This day was an across the grades event. Students expressed such enjoyment of this day that the Mini-Olympics was organised using across the grade groups as well.



### **3. Catholic Life and Mission**

#### **3.1 Catholic Heritage**

A strong Mercy tradition exists at Our Lady of the Rosary, emphasising justice, inclusion, care and respect, a legacy of the Sisters of Mercy who established and ran the school from 1898 until 1979. During 2008 student leaders researched this history, selecting past community figures to name the four colour houses and give focus to social justice work.

Servant leadership is developed in all students, and formalised by Year 5 in a program of physical, emotional and spiritual support for Kindergarten and their families.

#### **3.2 Religious Life of the School**

Throughout 2008 staff, parents and students were involved in numerous liturgical celebrations centred around the Church's liturgical calendar as well as grade Masses and those commemorating other significant events such as the opening and end of the school year, the Year 6 North Shore Cluster Mass, the World Youth Day, Year 6 Graduation, Parish Family Masses, the Diocesan Mission, Grandparent's Day, Mother's Day, Harmony Day, Father's Day, Anzac Day and Remembrance Day.

In 2008 we were fortunate to have a Christian singer/song writer lead us in whole school concerts at both Easter and Christmas time.

The Parish's comprehensive sacramental program (Reconciliation, Holy Eucharist and Confirmation) was supported by diocesan curriculum modules in the relevant grades and by a Reconciliation Reflection Day.

Through Lenten Project Compassion Appeal, Our Lady of the Rosary students raised funds for Caritas.

Throughout 2008, school community prayer life included weekly school prayer at assembly, daily classroom prayer, weekly staff prayer and monthly staff prayer reflections.

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

Our Lady of the Rosary school has developed a strong relationship with our Parish – the Cathedral Parish, evidenced by the liturgy planning team which includes the Religious Education Coordinator and the Parish Priest. In 2008 classes began attending one of the Parish Masses each week, and Parish Family Masses were trialled. These provided invaluable opportunities for students, their parents and teachers to share responsibility with other parishioners for liturgical ministries such as reading, Eucharistic ministry, processions and choir.

Strong school support of parish projects was evident through information given at assemblies and grade meetings and through regular school newsletter entries by the Religious Education Coordinator.

#### **3.4 Catholic Worldview**

'At Our Lady of the Rosary, our Catholic worldview informs the way that we live, learn and teach. We believe that God's love for each of us is central to our relationships'.

As a springboard to our work on values education, the staff engaged in a process to align the ten statements of the Catholic Worldview with Our Lady of the Rosary values and Mission Statement. A Kindergarten to Year 6 program was developed, family values were surveyed and a Year 6 Values forum was held to:

- reflect on values education at Our Lady of the Rosary
- review the Mercy Values that are at the heart of Our Lady of the Rosary and a part of our history



- link our present day story to the story of our past
- ensure that we are covering all the Mercy values and that they are incorporated within the nine core values promoted by the Federal Government.

Year 6 student research following this forum resulted in the renaming of our colour houses as a continual reminder to the community of our local Catholic heritage.

### **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.

The Religious Education Coordinator completed her Master of Religious Education at the Australian Catholic University in March 2008.

The Religious Education Coordinator and classroom teachers worked with an Education Officer-Mission Services from the Catholic Schools Office to develop learning sequences for modules of work.



## **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**

Dialogue was commenced with staff and parents in relation to the School Review recommendations about celebrating success as a community. It was decided through this discussion that Principal's awards would commence in 2009 to celebrate the learning of each child publically.

A social skills program, playground sport skills and the Rock and Water program were provided as a direct result of the identification of social skill developmental needs in the student body resulting in a significant reduction in the number and severity of pupil referrals to the leadership team.

### **4.3 Pastoral Care of Families**

A long term commitment was made by the P&F to work on further developing the community life of the school. Many current initiatives were acknowledged as being of great community benefit, such as Permanent Pantry, Men in the Morning and the Class Parent Network with associated picnics and social events. A commitment to whole school events was perceived to be essential in order to become one strong Catholic community.

### **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

During 2008 a number of special programs which supported student learning were established. They included:

- Development of the pedagogy used to facilitate learning in writing. Our school-based literacy mentor provided a program of professional development in writing for the staff. Five teachers undertook training in Teaching English to Speakers of Languages Other than English (TESOL).
- Development of the pedagogy used to facilitate learning in numeracy. Our school-based numeracy mentors provided a program of professional development in numeracy for the staff. Three teachers attended the Mathematical Association of NSW Conference in Wollongong and one mentor completed the Certificate in Primary Mathematics Education through the University of Sydney.
- The mathematics enrichment program, Come on Kids, was piloted for gifted mathematicians in Years 2 and 4.
- Extensive staff training occurred regarding Autism Spectrum Disorder, resulting in a refinement of school practices to support student learning.
- Curriculum mapping Kindergarten to Year 6 was further developed in 2008. Teachers undertook research and attended courses in order to select a web-based software package to enable the sharing of curriculum across the school.

### 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 52 students in Year 3 and 54 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
<b>Reading</b>	School	4	12	12	19	31	23	96
	National	6.1	12	17.7	23	21.7	17.7	92.1
<b>Writing</b>	School	0	2	12	15	33	38	100
	National	2.9	6.5	15.6	28.7	27.4	17.2	95.4
<b>Spelling</b>	School	2	4	15	23	23	33	98
	National	5.9	10	19	25.9	21.9	15.5	92.4
<b>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</b>	School	0	4	12	31	17	37	100
	National	6.6	10.7	17.3	23.3	21.3	19.1	91.7
<b>Numeracy</b>	School	0	2	19	44	19	15	100
	National	3.3	10.9	22.9	28	20.9	12.4	95.0



It was pleasing to note that the percentage of students achieving at Band 6 (and at Bands 5 and 6 combined) was higher than national figures in every test area. It was also pleasing to see that the percentage of students in the lower bands was much lower than national figures and that in three test areas – writing, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy – all students achieved at or above the national minimum. The NAPLAN results at Year 3 level indicate that recent teaching and intervention strategies in writing, and grammar and punctuation are working effectively. These strategies will be continued and expanded in 2009. The clustering of students in the middle bands in reading and numeracy may be a cause for concern and indicates a need to review expected standards and ways of teaching these skills in the middle years of primary to improve the achievement of these students. While extensive program development has occurred in numeracy teaching during 2007-2008, further modification may be necessary following a review to be undertaken in 2009.

#### 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
<b>Reading</b>	School	0	6	20	13	31	30	100
	National	7.5	13.6	23.9	26	18.1	9.3	90.9
<b>Writing</b>	School	2	4	7	35	28	24	98
	National	5.9	11.8	25.3	29.3	17.9	8.3	92.5
<b>Spelling</b>	School	2	4	9	37	39	9	98
	National	6.8	12.8	24.9	28.2	18.2	7.6	91.7
<b>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</b>	School	0	11	11	9	33	35	100
	National	6.6	11	21.2	26.4	19.9	13.4	91.9
<b>Numeracy</b>	School	0	9	17	37	20	17	100
	National	5.9	17.4	28.9	25.7	13.9	6.6	92.6

Band distributions for Year 5 were particularly pleasing in reading, writing, and grammar and punctuation. These results indicate that the intervention programs for students are working effectively to support and refine their skills in literacy, and that students are being extended to achieve against higher standards. This is particularly obvious when achievement in Bands 5, 6, and 7 is compared to national data. Relative to other test areas, achievement in spelling and numeracy, while still well above national figures, is less strong. Approaches to the teaching of spelling will be reviewed in 2009 and some changes in focus or technique may be deemed necessary. However, the clustering of students in the middle bands for numeracy may be a cause for concern and indicates the need to review expected standards and ways of teaching mathematics in the middle and upper primary years in order to enable more students to achieve at the higher levels. This review will also take place in 2009.

### 5.3 Extracurricular Activities

Children at Our Lady of the Rosary had the opportunity to participate in many extracurricular events and activities including:

- intra-school Kindergarten to Year 6 Public Speaking Competition and the Year 6 Diocesan Public Speaking Competition
- intra-school chess competition
- Maths Olympiad
- Rock and Water Program
- Active After School Program
- Taekwondo



- Tournament of the Minds.

#### 5.4 Professional Learning

The average expenditure on professional learning, per teacher, in 2008 was \$2,534.

Four whole staff development days were held in 2008. They were:

- Term 1: Developing the 2008-2011 Strategic Plan and the 2008 Annual Management Plan
- Term 1: Input on developing students' mental strategies in mathematics and number facts
- Term 2: Training in Music teaching Kindergarten to Year 6
- Term 3: Input on grammar and punctuation and across the school assessment comparison.

Other major professional learning programs were:

- Our school-based literacy mentor provided professional development in teaching writing for the staff. Five teachers undertook TESOL training. Two staff attended the Future Directions in Literacy Conference at Sydney University. The Play and Literacy Conference in Auckland was attended by two staff.
- Our school-based numeracy mentors provided a program of professional development in numeracy for the staff. Three teachers attended the Mathematical Association of NSW Conference in Wollongong and one mentor completed the Certificate in Primary Mathematics Education through the University of Sydney.
- Extensive staff training occurred regarding Autism Spectrum Disorder. Two teachers attended the Autism Queensland conference and another two attended the cross-sectoral course Positive Partnerships run by the Australian Government.
- Curriculum mapping Kindergarten to Year 6 was further developed in 2008. Teachers undertook research and attended courses in order to select a web-based software package to enable the sharing of curriculum across the school.



## 6. Strategic Initiatives

### 6.1 2008 Priorities and Achievements

2008 saw the first year of Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic School's new Strategic Plan. A major priority was the achievement of greater consistency of teaching practice in literacy and numeracy from Kindergarten to Year 6. All teachers have been trained in the use of the individual diagnostic interview and the teaching of mental strategies.

Professional development undertaken on the Quality Teaching Framework in 2007 was extended in 2008 with significant shared learning experiences for all staff. Strategies were developed and initiatives implemented to deepen the level of engagement in learning experiences of all students, particularly boys.

In the area of ICLT, teachers engaged in intensive training in the use of podcasts and movie creation software, particularly using the iLife suite. Classes piloted units utilising claymation.

### 6.2 2009 Priorities and Challenges

In 2009 it is planned that:

- the agreed practices which have flowed from professional development in mathematics and English will be reflected in the relevant school policies
- parent education will be facilitated by staff in the area of mathematics
- as a staff we will continue to develop our practice in mathematics and English with special emphasis on moving student performance in the NAPLAN tests from the middle bands into the higher bands as indicated by the review of the 2008 results
- curriculum mapping will commence using Techpaths software to allow flexible access to Kindergarten to Year 6 planning and assessment documents by all staff, fostering knowledge of prior learning of students and thus optimising continuity of learning
- Primary Connections, the Academy of Science teaching program, will be implemented Kindergarten to Year 6
- enrichment initiatives will be a whole school project.



## **7. Parent Participation**

### **7.1 Introduction**

During 2008 parents participated in the:

- P&F
- Class Parent Network
- Playground Development Committee
- Uniform Change Committee.

### **7.2 Parent Satisfaction**

During Kindergarten 2009 interviews for enrolment of siblings, parents were specifically asked about aspects of the school with which they were happy and those over which they had issues or concerns. The Principal explained that this was an opportunity for feedback which would assist the school to improve its performance.

Parents expressed their confidence in the work the school was doing in literacy and numeracy. It was also felt that the parent body's understanding of the Pastoral Care Policy and of the school's practices in this area have greatly improved. Dialogue regarding celebrating success was positively noted as was increased involvement in gala days in sport.

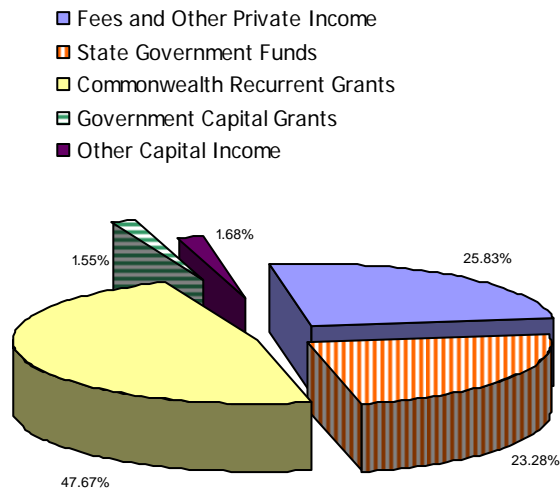


## 8. Financial Report

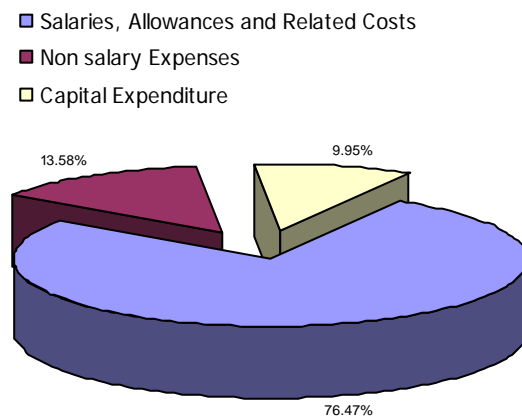
Consistent with Board of Studies requirements, financial income and expenditure for this school is shown in the graphs below.

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, Diann Hynes.