

St Gerard's Catholic School Carlingford

2006 Annual Report



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1. Message from Key Groups in Our School Community

1.1 Message from the Principal

Report to the Parents' and Friends' 2006.

Religious Dimension

In Term 4 we appointed a new Religious Education Coordinator, who has moved smoothly into this role with great enthusiasm.

Plans for the end of year carols, mass and Year 6 Graduation are well underway.

This year has seen further development of our Religious Education modules and we hope to continue this development next year.

One of our most exciting projects this year has been the formation of our Social Justice groups who have raised awareness in the community to the plight of others in our world. One of the most pleasing features of these groups is that many of the initiatives were instigated by the children.

The staff has really appreciated the community support for our whole school celebrations such as Mother's and Father's day liturgies.

The classroom masses and liturgies are one of the highlights of the year to me and we are very fortunate that the parish priest takes the time to give the children such an intimate celebration of our Faith.

Educational Dimension

This has been a very busy year as the community undertook school review.

The process used by staff was very valuable as we reflected our practice and looked ahead to the future. The classrooms are dynamic learning spaces with each staff member striving to cater for all students. The new reporting system imposed by the government was professionally approached by staff and delivered to parents. The open class rooms were an important time in the year and the opportunity was taken up by parents to see the learning in situ.

We have again refined our Learning Support and Gifted Programs to reach those children with some issues in acquiring literacy and numeracy skills and offer opportunities to children who are working at a high level in their stage.

In the school review feedback (the report is still in draft) St Gerard's was commended for the Catholic Life and Mission of the school and the panel commented on the lived vision of the school that was so evident to them.

Our Learning Support and Gifted programs were also given commendation and our efforts to cater for all children.

In our new strategic plan that is nearing completion we will be focusing on delivery quality pedagogy to our community.

Community Dimension

St Gerard's is blessed with a wonderful community that actively strives to support each other. We have again been blessed with a wide range of support by parents in our school. From financial support for reading and the refurbishment of the infants area to the amazing work being carried out in the clothing shop. A special mention must be made of the market day and the community responses to the rain, "what rain"? (Perhaps the only significant rain this year). Classroom help and all other interaction with our parents are highly valued by our staff. I would like to thank everyone for supporting various causes we have presented you with this year; I am always humbled by your response.

I would like to publicly thank the staff of St Gerard's, they are an amazing team who are never satisfied with their best and are prepared to challenge themselves for the best possible outcome for the children, they are very highly valued by me and the children.

Next year we are very excited with our new strategic directions. We will be focusing on literacy, numeracy and assessment. Another focus will be building closer ties with the new parish through working with our sister school Our Lady Help of Christians, Epping.



Joint staff development days are planned and the children of OLHC will be visiting our school and working with our children.

Thank you again for all the support this year and we look forward to another wonderful year of living and learning together.

Carmel Turner

1.2 Message from the Parent Body

Annual General Meeting of Parents and Friends Association

The Annual General meeting of the St Gerard's Parents and Friends Association was held on Thursday 30th November 2006. It was well attended but it would have been great to see a few more "new" faces from the younger classes.

In the Treasurer's report it was outlined that financially we have had a better than expected result for the year. This was largely due to the money raised by the Market Day. The treasurer has done a terrific job receiving money, keeping accurate records and issuing receipts and cheques where required.

The P&F have provided funds for a number of needs in the school this year such as:

\$20,000 to complete the installation of air-conditioning in the remaining seven classrooms

\$16,300 to renovate the Kindy wetroom

\$5,200 for guided readers

\$2,500 for new music equipment

\$1,500 for school maintenance

\$1,000 for the Year 6 end of year formal

\$1,000 Donation to the Catholic Mission

\$300 for a new shade sail

Obviously the financial rewards are important but the functions held really focussed on developing friendships and a sense of community within the school rather than raising money.

Some of the P&F's achievements this year have included:

Improving communication between the Executive and the greater school community by detailed updates after each General meeting in the Profile and continuation of the weekly Profile thanks to the publicity officer and also school administrative staff.

An extremely successful Market Day thanks to the fund raising team (and congratulations to all those behind the scenes who participated by donating their time, resources or financially) despite the weather

Opening of our own Clothing Pool shop due to an amazing amount of hard work and dedication by the parent in charge.

General meetings were held on different days of the week to try to accommodate as many people as possible.

An updated Parent Page online including detailed Minutes of all business conducted at the General meetings thanks to the P&F secretary.

Closer relationship between the Parish and the School thanks to the P&F faith convenors and also the Sacramental Co-ordinators.

We attempted to make the area around the Council Carpark at the rear of the school safer by erecting signage

An agreement was reached between the school and the Parish regarding sharing in the costs of the cleaning of the hall on a weekly basis

A very successful Dinner Dance thanks to the social events team

We have a new Executive on the Diocesan Parent Council so we will have greater opportunity to raise any "hot issues" parents would like addressed at a Diocesan level

The Discos with special thanks to the organizing teams.

The maintenance of the school's buildings and grounds thanks to the maintenance team and all who attended the working Bees throughout the year or paid their levy

Involvement with the Kindy Orientation for 2007



International Teacher's Day morning tea for teachers

So as you can see, it has been a fairly busy year!

The Principal addressed the meeting in relation to the religious, educational and community dimensions of the school. Just a reminder that the Annual Report for the school is available on the website. The Principal advised the meeting that after feedback received from the children the reintroduction of "Lunch Clubs" for Primary students would occur next year. These will be made up of a Science Club, an Art Group and a Dance and Drama Group. An outdoor art room will be created under a newly constructed awning behind the Year 4/Parent Room block. The school will also be looking to be a part of the non-competitive Rock Eisteddfod next year. The principal also advised that as we will be a full two stream school next year (i.e. 14 classes) there will be no spare rooms. The final number for Kindergarten classes at this stage are 28 in each class with Teachers Aides coming in for 2 hours 5 days a week for a "Literacy Block". Children will not be taken to Oval if the temperature is over 35 degrees. Many thanks to the Principal for all her help and support of the P&F throughout the year.

A vote was taken regarding continuation of the Catholic Mission Donation and it was agreed that the P&F should continue to donate \$1,000 per annum on behalf of parents from the funds raised throughout the year.

The election of next year's officers and committee members was held and all the positions filled:

President

Vice President

Treasurer

Secretary

Faith Development Convenor

Parent Communication Convenor

Maintenance Convenors

Fund Raising Convenor

Social Convenor

I would like to encourage all parents to take an active role in whatever way you may be able to with the education of your child/ren. The Parents and Friends is one such way to take an active role. No two groups have more to gain from working together to help children become effective individuals than the family and the school.

I would like to thank everyone involved with the year's activities, wish you all a happy and holy Christmas and New Year and wish next year's team all the best.

President 2006

1.3 Message from the Student Body

St Gerard's is a wonderful school with excellent teachers and great students. There are many opportunities for students to learn and develop their talents, whatever their interest is.

Whether sport, computers, meeting new people or simply doing one's best, St Gerard's offers a great deal to all.

St Gerard's values the contribution to decisions and the life of our school from our students. Year 6 students play an important part of student leadership in the school with Captains, Vice Captains, Colour House Captains and all the other parts of school life where Year 6 demonstrate leadership such as in the areas of Catholic life and mission, environment and student welfare.

One role that Year 6 really value is the Year 6-Kindergarten buddy system. We enjoy showing the newest members of our school community where everything is and sharing with them all the wonderful events that are part of our life at St Gerard's.

School Captains 2006



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.

In 2006 the school undertook School Review which was a wonderful vehicle for community consultation.

Parents, children and staff undertook a series of reflections which led to the articulation of our beliefs about the life and role of a Catholic learning community.

The school was commended for a "lived" Vision and Mission which permeates the daily life of the school.

The school was also commended for its special programs to support student learning.

The school was also recognised for its rich community life.

The information gathered gives the school clear directions for 2007-10.

2.2 Student Profile

The following information describes the student profile for 2006:

| Girls | Boys | LBOTE* | Indigenous | Total |
|-------|------|--------|------------|-------|
| 152 | 162 | 33 | 0 | 314 |

*Language background other than English

Enrolments have increased and the school has grown from eleven classes in 2003 (262 students) to fourteen classes (338 students enrolled for 2007).

2.3 Enrolment Policy

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established an Enrolment Policy which is implemented by all schools in the Diocese. The full text of this policy can be found at

http://www.cso.brokenbay.catholic.edu.au/resources/pdfs/Policy-Enrolment_Apr2006.pdf

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.

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:

- a) have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of



- Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines
- b) 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
 - c) 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 |
|----|---|---|-------|
| 24 | 0 | 0 | 24 |

2.5 Teacher Attendance and Retention Rates

The average teacher attendance rate during 2006 was 94.8%. This figure does not include teachers on planned leave.

The teacher retention rate from 2005 to 2006 was 91.6%.

2.6 Teacher Satisfaction

The School Review process was an opportunity for staff to articulate their beliefs about St Gerard's school and what was highly valued.

Staff felt valued by the school. They valued the opportunities for professional development and leadership opportunities.

Staff valued each other and had a strong sense of collegiality.

Staff felt free to 'risk take' in their quest for excellence in the classroom.

Staff valued parent participation.

Staff valued their physical working environment.

2.7 Student Satisfaction

During School Review the children were surveyed about their school.

The children were asked to name three things that were special about their school.

A pattern emerged:

- St Gerard's has friendly and caring teachers;
- The children are kind and caring;
- We are lucky to have a church;
- The parents help at the school;
- We have excellent buildings and playgrounds;
- We have many extra activities.

The children were asked "How do you know?"

- Our school and community work together.
- School rules keep us safe.
- The teachers help me understand what is important.
- We help other people by fundraising.
- Events are joyful and fun.
- We get to show our talents.

These were common themes throughout the surveys.

St Gerard's is blessed to have such receptive and perceptive children and families and dedicated staff.



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.

The Opening and Blessing of our new school facilities and refurbishment in March was a wonderful celebration of community, faith and education. the ceremony took place on Sunday 5th March so that the parish could be involved. Over eight hundred people

attended and the community pride and emotions were palpable.

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.

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.

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.

Staff joined with two other schools in a staff development day to explore the new Religious Education modules and look at teaching and learning strategies.

The Religious Education Coordinator subscribed to resources on the internet and used the staff page on CASTnet (a learning management system) 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 Parents' and Friends' Association (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.

Our social justice team raised funds to bring a family from Sierra Leone to Australia. This initiative was organised by The Northern Beaches Refugee Sanctuary. They also met the family at the airport. The family later visited our school to speak to, and thank, the children for their sponsorship.

The social justice team raised awareness about the plight of abandoned animals and supported the RSPCA.

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 Parents and Friends 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 new 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 Diocesan Policy on Professional Requirements for the Accreditation of Teachers of Religious Education can be found at:

http://www.cso.brokenbay.catholic.edu.au/resources/pdfs/Policy-Rqs_Accrd_Tchrs_RE.pdf



With leadership from the Religious Education Coordinator and Diocesan education officers, staff explored the new syllabus in Religious Education. Differing strategies based on whole brain learning were the focus of a staff development day with two other diocesan schools. This was also followed up in staff meetings.

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 Discipline Policies which are implemented by all schools in the Diocese. The full text of these policies can be found at

http://www.cso.brokenbay.catholic.edu.au/resources/pdfs/Policy-Pastoral_Care_Oct05.pdf and

http://www.cso.brokenbay.catholic.edu.au/resources/pdfs/Policy-Student_Discipline_Policy_Oct05.pdf

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.

St Gerard's strives to build community in every possible way. The pastoral 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 2006 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 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. When a parent died in 2004 the response from the community was humbling in its intensity.

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

4.3 Pastoral Care of Families

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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 2006 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 new statement is in every child's Religion book and is read at assembly.

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 are posted in the newsletter or at the assembly.

A Pastoral Care Policy team was formed late in the year to redevelop the school's Pastoral Care Policy for 2006.

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 full text of this policy can be found at

http://www.cso.brokenbay.catholic.edu.au/resources/pdfs/Policy-Complaints_Handling.pdf

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 2006.

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 CASTnet where class pages offer children the opportunities for on-line 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 appendices added. Staff were inserviced further in the needs and characteristics of gifted students.

CASTnet 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 CASTnet.

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.



5.4 Student Achievement

Literacy

St Gerard's continued to gain excellent results in external testing.

In the Basic Skills Test in Year 5 in literacy, 61% of students were placed in Band 6 (state, 22%); 26% of students were placed in Band 5, and 13% of students were placed in Band 4. No students were placed in Band 3 (state, 14%), no students were placed in Band 2 (state, 5%), and no students were placed in Band 1 (state, 1%).

In literacy in Year 5 St Gerard's has had exceptional results over a sustained period. Specific skill groups cater for primary children who have any "gaps" in their learnings as a result of whole school assessment and analysis of the BST.

Literacy Trend Data Year 5

| Year | State | School |
|------|-------|--------|
| 2002 | 57.8 | 63.9 |
| 2003 | 57.5 | 61.1 |
| 2004 | 57.4 | 66.0 |
| 2005 | 57.0 | 62.7 |
| 2006 | 57.3 | 63.7 |

In Year 3, 36% of students were placed in Band 5 (state, 14%); 42% of students were placed in Band 4 (state, 28%); 20% of students were placed in Band 3 (state, 32%); 2% of students were placed in Band 2 (state, 19%) and no students were placed in band 1 (state, 8%).

In the area of literacy in Year 3 St Gerard's has consistently performed above state average. Support is given to all students from Kindergarten if a learning difficulty is observed. Intervention is immediate and well planned. Teachers, learning support and parents are involved. In some cases, individual learning plans are devised.

Literacy Trend Data Year 3

| Year | State | School |
|------|-------|--------|
| 2002 | 50.6 | 58.0 |
| 2003 | 50.6 | 56.1 |
| 2004 | 50.5 | 56.1 |
| 2005 | 50.8 | 57.2 |
| 2006 | 50.7 | 55.4 |

100% of children in Year 5 achieved national reading and writing benchmarks in 2006.

100% of children in Year 3 who attempted the BST achieved national reading and writing benchmarks in 2006 (one child was exempt from the test).

In relation to the Basic Skills the average growth of a student at St Gerard's is 7.0 (state, 6.8).

On the percentile scale less than 9.1 students are on the 25th percentile, 60.6% students are placed between the 25th and 75th percentile and 30.3% of students are placed on the 75th percentile or above.

In the University of New South Wales English Competition, St Gerard's received 3 High Distinctions, 11 Distinctions and 14 Credits.

In Year 3, 34.1% of students were placed in Band 5 (state, 11.9%); 46.3% of students were placed in Band 4 (state, 36.6%); 19.5% of students were placed in Band 3 (state, 34%), 2% of students were placed in Band 2 (state, 18%) and no students were placed in Band 1 (state, 8%).

The University of NSW Competitions are voluntary.

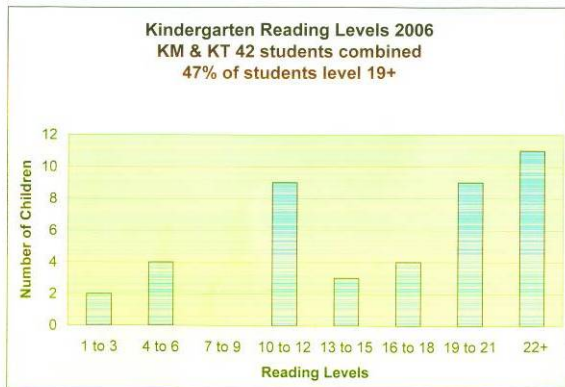
In the University of NSW Writing Competition St Gerard's received 4 Distinctions and 8 Credits.

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, 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. As a result the reading levels in Kindergarten were raised with 47% of Kindergarten reading at level 19+ (the Diocesan



benchmark is 6-8). It should be noted that Kindergarten 2006 contained four students who were funded because of learning disabilities.



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 the Basic Skills Test in Year 5, 68% of students were placed in Band 6 (state, 30%); 16% of students were placed in Band 5 (state, 26%); 13% of students were placed in Band 4 (state, 24%) and 3% of students were placed in Band 3 (state, 15%). No students were placed in Band 2 (state, 5%) and no students were placed in Band 1 (state, 1%).

In numeracy, Year 5 have 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.

Numeracy Trend Data Year 5

| Year | State | School |
|------|-------|--------|
| 2002 | 60.2 | 69.2 |
| 2003 | 60.0 | 63.9 |
| 2004 | 60.7 | 69.6 |
| 2005 | 60.4 | 69.3 |
| 2006 | 61.5 | 70.6 |

In the Basic Skills Test in Year 3, 18% of students were placed in Band 5 (state, 22%); 43% of students were placed in Band 4 (state, 24%); 23% were placed in Band 3 (state 26%); 16% of students were placed in Band 2 (state, 19%) and no students were placed in Band 1 (state, 9%).

In numeracy, Year 3 have historically performed well. However, last year, while still scoring above the state, there was a slight downward turn. The school, acting on the new Strategic Plan, planned extensive professional development in numeracy to maintain the high standard the school has set. There are many new staff members who had not participated in numeracy professional development at St Gerard's.

Numeracy Trend Data Year 3

| Year | State | School |
|------|-------|--------|
| 2002 | 53.0 | 66.2 |
| 2003 | 52.8 | 60.7 |
| 2004 | 52.3 | 56.0 |
| 2005 | 53.6 | 58.3 |
| 2006 | 58.3 | 54.7 |

100% of children in Year 5 achieved national numeracy benchmarks in 2006.

100% of children in Year 3 who attempted the BST achieved national numeracy benchmarks in 2006 (one child was exempt from the test).

In the University of New South Wales Mathematics Competition, St Gerard's received 2 High Distinctions, 13 Distinctions and 19 Credits.

In the Maths Olympiad, 3 children scored in the top 10% and 5 scored in the top 25%.

In the NSW University Science Competition, St Gerard's received 14 Distinctions and 10 Credits.



In the NSW University Competition for Computers, St Gerard's received 2 High Distinctions, 9 Distinctions and 11 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.

Targets for 2007

- To engage in professional development in strengthening classroom strategies in teaching mathematics and literacy.
- Train two staff members to be the Numeracy and Literacy Facilitators for St Gerard's.
- To develop a numeracy and literacy team on staff.

- Widen opportunities for the use of CASTnet in teaching and learning programs.
- Further develop a shared understanding of educating the gifted and talented child, and translate this into program differentiation.
- To explore assessment and its impact on quality teaching and learning.

5.5 Information, Communication and Learning Technologies (ICLT)

Staff formed ICLT teams to support each other in the use of CASTnet and its application to teaching and learning for:

- offering opportunities for completing homework online;
- providing internet links to support integrated units;
- retrieving information;
- creating class pages and properties;
- purchasing and maintaining hardware.

5.6 Professional Learning

All teachers participated in a range of professional learning activities in 2006.

Opportunities were offered to staff in:

- training in the use of BST data and its application to teaching and learning programs (two staff);
- participation in a staff development day, looking at strategies to use the new Religious Education syllabus modules (all staff);
- the program review process in which all staff gain K to 6 perspective and have a collective responsibility to evaluate programs (all staff);
- development of new assessment and reporting cycle (all staff);
- exploring the Catholic Worldview and its implications in developing a new Vision and Mission Statement (all staff);
- training of staff in the Observation Survey (two staff);



- tracking mathematical meaning – a monitoring tool to track student learning K to 6 (two staff);
- Teacher's Assistants training (five staff);
- teaching students whose second language is English (one staff);
- training in CASTnet, ICDL , myclasses and Podcasting (all staff);
- Circles training (two staff);
- Visual Arts training (all staff);
- early literacy (six staff);
- Aboriginal perspective (all staff);
- speech and language (all staff);
- social justice (all staff);
- all staff were involved in School Review Tiers 1 and 11;
- CPR (all staff);
- anaphylaxis training (all staff);
- payroll and finance training (two staff).

The average expenditure on professional learning per teacher in 2006 was \$1,185.



6. Extracurricular Program

St Gerard's has a school choir which participates in local eisteddfods and performs at special functions. In 2006 the choir increased in size and performed at whole school events.

The senior and junior bands expanded in 2006, 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.

St Gerard's 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.

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 2006 Priorities and Achievements

The main areas in the 2006 Annual Plan were:

Catholic Life and Mission

Review and development of a new Vision and Mission Statement gave the whole community the opportunity to share their beliefs and their hopes for the future of St Gerard's.

The statement is accessible to children and will be 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 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 CASTnet to gain information and develop effective teaching and learning experiences using technology.

After review was made of our current practices in assessment and reporting the new cycle was put into practice. A committee consulted with all staff and developed a new cycle of reporting that places a greater emphasis on parent input as well as more frequent reporting. This was modified to

include the governments new mandatory reporting format. Staff were inserviced in the rationale behind the system and on the use of technology to deliver the tool.

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.

Procedures have been developed that share the responsibility for program review. This enables teachers to gain a K to 6 perspective and engage in dialogue about the strengths of each of the curriculum areas. It also provides a rich opportunity to identify and rectify potential gaps in teaching and learning.

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.

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

7.2 2007 Priorities and Challenges

Annual Goals – A Synopsis

These will be drawn from the new Strategic Plan which is nearing completion.

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.
- Deepen the religious literacy and faith formation of all staff.
- To build a formal relationship with Our Lady Help of Christians through combined staff development and student activities, as the parishes of Carlingford and Epping become one.

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.
- Professional learning for staff in CASTnet.

- Develop the use of information technology to foster quality teaching and learning experiences.
- Develop information pages on CASTnet, 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 Parents' and Friends' Association raise funds for the school and this has enabled the school to resource many Key Learning Areas especially in technology and literacy.

The Parents' and Friends' 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 Sign

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.



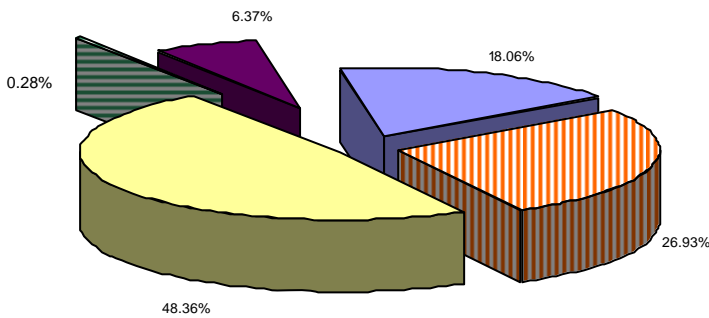
9. Financial Report

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.

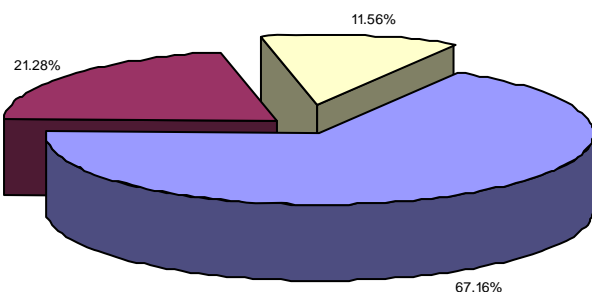
Income

- 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.