

# Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic School Waitara

## 2006 Annual Report



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

### 1.1 Message from the Principal

As we draw to the close of my last year with you, in this the International Year of Community, I believe that we can feel a sense of pride and achievement for the work that we have done together in 2006 as we respond to the mission of Catholic schools to be, in the words of Pope John Paul II, 'a school of holiness' existing to 'give saints to the world'.

Expressions of true appreciation and celebrating success are both very important elements of a quality Catholic learning environment in which people feel connected and valued for their God-given gifts. This annual report to the P&F provides one opportunity to do this.

### 1.2 Message from the Parent Body

2006 was a transition year for the P&F with a number of Mike Galvin's leadership team completing their three-year term on the P&F. The new P&F team built on the significant achievements of the previous years. The major achievements were:

- Consultative development and launching of a new 3-year strategy with priorities being to complete the air conditioning in all classes and the library, continue to contribute to the school's IT programme and then focus on the canteen and provide playground equipment.
- Community involvement with events such as 'Tissues and Tears' welcoming for new Kindy Parents, Father's Day breakfast and Mother's Day functions and stall and Children's Discos were all successful in getting the School community together.
- Our Class Parent Network run by Robyn Axam has been a tremendous success by providing the structure to tap into every class to get feedback on issues and opportunities.
- The development of an Orientation pack for new parents has been very well received.

Our major fund raising event was the Trivia Night that had more than one hundred people attend and raised over \$14,000 - the efforts of Sally Harrison and Virginia Gahan in pulling this together have been exceptional. During 2006 the P&F contributed over \$42,000 to assist with the school's technology commitment and completing of air conditioning in the Kindergarten and Year 6 classrooms.

Going forward, the early groundwork was laid to change the traditional Fete to a Spring Carnival - taking the best features of the Fete and adding some new approaches. Also, we developed the framework to introduce a Melbourne Cup Raffle in 2007 based on the successful model used by some schools in our Diocese.

I would like to make a final comment on the quality of our volunteers. The teamwork amongst our people, absence of egos and willingness to make a difference has been a standout achievement of the team - achievements that have built on past P&F committees. The teamwork is extended to the relationships with the School Leadership Team where there has been a strong collaborative relationship.

The P&F is only as strong as the quality of its people. We have had strong teams over a number of years but need to continue building on this platform.

Our joint success depends on the continued involvement of parents who want to make a difference. One of the major achievements of the P&F in 2006 has been to tap into a growing number of quality people who have contributed in many ways to the school.

Ross Anderson

### 1.3 Message from the Student Body

2006 was a wonderful year for the students of Our Lady of the Rosary. Some of the highlights were notable sporting success in Cross Country, as well as the Athletics and Swimming carnivals. The purchase of lots of sporting equipment and the introduction of Active After School Activities and the 10 000 Steps program was particularly exciting, as



was the Rock and Water program for the boys.

Our school walkathon was a fabulous day, where students, teachers and our parents walked together to raise money for the Cancer Council. It was a spectacular day where everyone felt like they were making a difference in the lives of others. This was also true when we had the Peru Stall once again. Not only were we able to buy some great handmade gifts, but also got to see what our last fundraising effort had achieved in Candela, Peru. It was a really special day.

Our Year 5 children were really excited by their leadership role in the school working with their Kinder buddies from the first day of school. Some really special friendships have begun, and were continued through weekly catch ups in literacy time and at other times in the week.

Our school looks beautiful with artworks from Kindergarten to Year 6 displayed all throughout the corridors and on the special Creative Arts noticeboard. We have some very talented artists at Our Lady of the Rosary, and we love seeing our work on the walls. Everyone also enjoyed when the drummers came and we all got to spend some time on the drums, making some great music.

It has been a great year, and we are excited about our future at Our Lady of the Rosary.



## 2. School Profile

### 2.1 Introduction

Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic School Waitara is a K to 6 Primary School located in the Broken Bay Diocese on Sydney's upper 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 Our Lady of the Rosary Parish site in Yardley Avenue. Students are primarily drawn from Waitara, Normanhurst and surrounding suburbs.

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

### 2.2 Student Profile

The following information describes the student profile for 2006:

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Indigenous	Total
214	175	162	0	389

\*Language background other than English

### 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](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 Diocesan Enrolment Policy has been implemented by the school's enrolment committee, consisting of the Principal, pastor and parishioners.

### 2.4 Staff Profile

The school's Leadership Team consists of the Principal, Assistant Principal, the Religious Education Co-ordinator and Co-ordinators

with special responsibility in the areas of Assessment and Reporting, Student Welfare and Information Communication and Learning Technologies.

Five non-teaching staff are employed at the school.

The NSW government requires that this report details the number of teachers who:

- 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
22	0	0	22

### 2.5 Teacher Attendance and Retention Rates

The average teacher attendance rate during 2006 was 93.9%. This figure does not include teachers on planned leave.

The teacher retention rate from 2005 to 2006 was 100%.



## 2.6 Teacher Satisfaction

No data specific to this area was collected.

## 2.7 Student Satisfaction

The significant involvement of students in leadership teams with real responsibility has increased the students' sense of ownership of the school and school initiatives at Our Lady of the Rosary.



### 3. Catholic Life and Mission

#### 3.1 Catholic Heritage

The school has a long and rich story of Catholic education, with a strong Mercy tradition emphasising justice, inclusion, care and respect for those in need. Cardinal Moran opened Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic School, Waitara on 5th February 1898. The school was established by the Sisters of Mercy and was staffed by them until 1979.

The school is strongly committed to creating a community in which all members experience a sense of welcome and belonging based on genuine Christian hospitality. The stone walls of both the Church and school buildings are important symbols for both the school and Parish community as 'living stones making a spiritual house' (1 Peter 2: 4-9). The school and the Parish continue the tradition of working together with parents to form children as living stones making up the spiritual building which is the community of the Church.

At Our Lady of the Rosary, each member of the community is considered a learner, and a commitment to lifelong learning is fostered within the context of a lived experience of our faith. In particular, the school aims to live out the Gospel values of respect, the dignity of each individual, inclusion and justice, in the relationships between the members of the community.

#### Highlights of the Year

Whole school masses were held to mark significant liturgical celebrations such as the Holy Week liturgy and the Christmas Concert. Class masses and liturgies were also held to celebrate the children's learning

#### 3.2 Liturgical Life

Prayer is a very important and regular part of every day for the children and staff. Children engage in a variety of prayer experiences and there is dedicated time each week for staff prayer which is always well attended.

Children have opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation throughout the year. They participate in whole school celebrations of Eucharist on various feast days and significant days in the life of the school. Teachers work together in Mass Teams, to plan these liturgies which occur twice each term.

It is a tradition in the school that primary classes celebrate a yearly class Mass at which the parish priest presides. Each year the children in the infant grades celebrate the Liturgy of the Word in their classrooms, led by one of the priests of the parish.

Children are also involved throughout the year in planning and participating in liturgies to mark important civil events, such as ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day.

Social justice issues which have been a focus of learning and discussion, such as project Compassion, Harmony Day, International Peace Day and Catholic Mission are also celebrated.

The Year 6 Liturgy Leadership Team and the Social Justice Team play a significant role in preparing liturgies under the guidance of the Religious Education Coordinator and Social Justice co-ordinators.

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

The school is an integral part of the life of the Parish of Our Lady of the Rosary and also serves the Parish of Our Lady Queen of Peace, Normanhurst. The school values the strong connections it has with both of these parishes. All whole school Masses are Our Lady of the Rosary Parish Masses, and are advertised in the Parish Bulletin. They provide a significant opportunity for the children to join with members of the wider parish to celebrate the Eucharist.

School facilities, including classrooms, the library and the staffroom, as well as the parish hall are used regularly throughout the year by the Our Lady of the Rosary parish for a variety of functions, including sacramental preparation, Parish Youth Group meetings and parish social functions.



The school is also used every weekend for devotions and meetings of the Korean community and, on occasions, as a venue for meetings held by the Catholic Schools Office.

The school shares resources for the sacramental programs with the parish. Members of the Parish Sacramental Team are able to borrow any resources that are needed to support the programs.

The school's yearly plan for teaching Religious Education has been organised so that units of work focusing on the Sacraments coincide with the Parish Sacramental Programs. A high value is placed upon members of staff attending the liturgies at which children first receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation and Eucharist in both parishes. In 2005, the school continued its tradition of participating in the "Seasons for Growth" program provided by the Parish.

Children from Our Lady of the Rosary participated in a number of Diocesan liturgies and events in 2006, including the Year 6 North Shore Cluster Mass and the annual Diocesan Mission Mass.

In 2006, the school participated in the Mass and cultural festivities which were organised by Our Lady of the Rosary Parish to celebrate Immigration Sunday in August. This included a performance by the school's band and choir.

The school choir worked with the Parish Music Minister in 2006 to enrich both the school and parish liturgical music. The successful Christmas and Advent masses were examples of this joint venture.

### 3.4 Religious Education Curriculum

2006 saw the continued implementation of the new Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum which was formally launched in 2006.

The curriculum has three components:

- the Foundations section which explores the context of religious education and the call to Catholic discipleship;
- the Syllabus; and
- the Modules, which are resource packages, assisting teachers in the development of units of work.

During 2006, teaching programs were developed, based on the new curriculum. Consistent with other subjects within the curriculum, the program is outcomes-based and seeks to ensure a breadth and depth of coverage of content over the thirteen years of schooling. Classroom displays and CASTnet class pages reflected the units of work that were the focus in each classroom.

In 2006, staff members were released from class to work with the Religious Education Advisor from the CSO. Religious Education teaching and learning also began to be guided by the Quality Teaching Framework.

The use of CASTnet class pages to display work and as a resource for both teachers and children was developed. A CASTnet RE Resource Page was established by the Religious Education Coordinator to support teachers.

### 3.5 Catholic Worldview

Education is about a search for meaning and purpose in life, and Catholic educators in a Catholic school have an all embracing worldview. As disciples of Jesus, our Catholic worldview permeates all aspects of school life and learning including all key learning areas. It is in the context of this Catholic worldview that we teach our children. Our school's Mission Statement states, ***'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 disciples of Jesus there is an affective, relational and action-oriented dimension that underpins the holistic and integrated nature of Catholic education and which both challenges and invites a personal action response by each person.



## Student Action

Students in the Year 6 Social Justice Team and on the Student Representative Council, organised and facilitated a number of initiatives under the guidance of the school's Social Justice Co-ordinator. These included whole school liturgies and raising awareness of the issues underlining events such as International Peace Day and Harmony Day.

Students held a Peruvian craft stall to raise money for the women and children of Candela in Peru after a visit by Mary Raica, the spokesperson for this organisation. This Candela venture is close to the heart of the Our Lady of the Rosary community as it is an initiative of the Monte Mercy Sisters, the Our Lady of the Rosary School founders.

### 3.6 Parent Participation in Catholic Life and Mission

In 2006, the school's goal was to continue to provide opportunities for parents to be fully aware of what their children were learning in Religious Education. Each grade sent out a curriculum newsletter each term outlining the topics that would be covered and the outcomes that would be addressed in Religious Education. The parent page on CASTnet is also a valuable source of information for parents. Many families accept invitations to attend class liturgies, as well as whole school liturgies.

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

Most teachers are accredited to teach Religious Education and those who are not have applied for accreditation. The school's Religious Education Coordinator has accepted a scholarship from the Broken Bay Institute and is undertaking a Masters Degree in Theological Studies.

In 2006, the Religious Education Co-ordinator regularly attended grade-planning sessions in order to support teachers in exploring and implementing the new Religious Education Curriculum. These team meetings provide the collegial context for ongoing professional development.

A staff spirituality day was held on Holy Thursday and addressed two of the modules planned by the diocese. The two modules were The Catholic Worldview and the Holy Spirit.

The Religious Education Coordinator attended all cluster and Religious Education days including the Religious Education Conference.

All staff worked for a half day with an Education Officer from the Mission Services team to plan a unit using the diocesan modules as a resource and the Quality Teaching Framework as a guide.

Two teachers were also involved with the diocesan Social Justice Network, which met several times throughout the year, and they participated in a full day workshop – "Hands On 2006 – Building a Just and Compassionate World".

One staff member participated in the diocesan Ministry for Teachers week-long course and the Principal was also involved in the Ministry for Teachers II course, which in 2006 formed the basis of the Principals' Conference. These week-long courses are offered by the Diocese to support the formation of teachers and are highly valued by staff.

Our Religious Education Co-ordinator began leading the staff in a deepening of their theological understandings at each staff meeting in Term 4.





## 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](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](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

Our Lady of the Rosary's whole school approach to pastoral care and discipline is set within the context of its Christian vision. This vision has as its focus the life of Jesus Christ, and is therefore concerned with the dignity and integral growth of each person. The school's Pastoral Care Policy takes its place within the total framework for quality learning at Our Lady of the Rosary.

During 2006, Our Lady of the Rosary's Leadership team and Pastoral Care team worked closely with a consultant from the Glasser Institute to develop and write the updated Pastoral Care Policy using the Quality Behaviour Policy as a framework. To develop this policy, the team referred to the guiding principals that lead our school, being:

- Choice Theory; and
- the Raising Responsibility System.

The responsibility for developing a whole school approach to pastoral care and discipline is shared with members of the community. The staff and parents worked with the senior faculty of the Glasser Institute for two years to develop the Pastoral Care Policy, which is a whole school values-based approach to pastoral care.

The school is committed to providing high quality and ongoing professional learning opportunities to teachers to support the implementation of the policy. Staff members have attended the Basic Intensive Training Week in Choice Theory, Reality Therapy and Lead Management prior to, and during, February 2007.

In addition, two staff members undertook advanced training by attending the Basic Practicum course in Choice Theory, Reality Therapy and Leadership Management. One staff member also attended a conference on Raising Responsibility.

In 2005, the Raising Responsibility System was introduced from Kindergarten to Year 6, to support the implementation of the Pastoral Care policy.

### 4.3 Pastoral Care of Families

Both formal and informal support structures exist for families within the Our Lady of the Rosary community. The counsellor for the North Shore cluster of schools in the diocese is available to support children and families.

The Class Parent Network provides practical support for families in circumstances such as bereavement or the birth of a new baby. For example, the Class Parent Network co-ordinates a 'permanent pantry' which provides meals for families who need this support from time to time. Class teachers, the Assistant Principal and the Principal all work closely with parents during the year to provide whatever support is required in relation to the children of these families. Where necessary, parents are referred to other outside agencies such as Centacare.

### 4.4 2006 Initiatives

The development of the Pastoral Care Policy has allowed the staff to review and reflect on current practices and improvements in this area. Our Lady of the Rosary now has:

- agreed responsibilities for staff, parents and students regarding bullying;
- an overview of Bullying Prevention and Management; and



- a plan for a safe school.

The basis of the Our Lady of the Rosary student leadership model is that every child in Year 6 is a leader and has a leadership role. Attendance at the annual Young Leaders' Day, held at Homebush in March 2005 with some 9000 students from a diverse range of schools and backgrounds across NSW, was a significant introduction to the concept of leadership for these students.

Through its particular focus on discipleship and servant leadership, student leaders in Year 6 participated in a variety of significant experiences enabling them to take action through their faith.

The Our Lady of the Rosary Feast Day celebrations were organised and hosted by Year 6 students with the support of their teachers. The Year 6 students planned and led a series of fun and engaging activities. The success of the day relied upon the commitment and team work of the Year 6 students.

The model of the Student Representative Council (SRC) at Our Lady of the Rosary is designed to provide opportunities for the children to practise important skills for the 21st Century, such as empathic listening, problem solving and reaching consensus.

In 2006, Our Lady of the Rosary once again ran a Peer Support program to connect children across the grades.

#### **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](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

The curriculum for Primary school is mandated and there are six Key Learning Areas:

- o English
- o Mathematics
- o Human Society in its Environment
- o Science and Technology
- o Creative and Practical Arts and
- o Personal Development, Health and Physical Education.

As a Catholic primary school, Our Lady of the Rosary also includes Religious Education as an additional Key Learning Area.

In 2006, all children in Years K to 6 also experienced:

- o a weekly forty-five minute specialist Physical Education Lesson;
- o a fortnightly one hour Visual Arts Lesson and
- o fortnightly Music lesson for thirty minutes with specialist teachers.

The Learning Support team, which in 2006 consisted of two Learning Support Teachers and two Teacher Assistants, supported children with specific learning difficulties and special needs to be integrated into their classes. The school takes a team approach to supporting these children, and so the Learning Support Team worked closely with classroom teachers to provide in-class support to the children wherever possible. Individual student needs were determined by ongoing assessment and monitoring of progress, and through consultation with parents. At least twice during the year, the parents of children with special needs were invited to attend a meeting with the classroom teacher and the Learning Support Teacher. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss the needs of their children and to set goals for the future which form the basis of the Individual Education Plan for that student.

Reading Recovery is part of Our Lady of the Rosary's whole school literacy strategy. The program provides an opportunity for additional support for children in Year 1 who require assistance in literacy. It is an internationally renowned and successful program. The Reading Recovery Teacher worked with five children per day. She taught each child on a one-to-one basis for 30 minutes each day and worked in close consultation with the teachers of those Year 1 students.

### 5.2 Approach to Teaching and Learning

Helping all children become better readers, better writers, better mathematicians and smarter thinkers is an ongoing goal for the teachers at Our Lady of the Rosary. The Catholic worldview is the basis of this learning. Making a positive difference in the lives of others is an important part of Catholic discipleship. The school aims to support the process of personal transformation through learning which is engaging, relevant and focused on meeting the individual needs of students. The school combines modern and creative approaches to teaching with traditional values such as respect, responsibility and co-operation to educate students for the demands of living in a community in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Our Lady of the Rosary's whole school approach to learning and teaching is marked by explicit teaching of:

- the social skills necessary for successful teamwork and co-operation;
- the use of technologies to enrich learning; and
- the application to teaching of insights from research on how the brain works.

Quality teaching and learning continues to be our focus at Our Lady of the Rosary. During 2006, as part of the Broken Bay Pedagogy Initiative, three staff were part of an initial three day introduction to the Quality Teaching Framework with an educational consultant from the University of Newcastle. Following this, all teachers were released for a half day to engage first hand with the



framework, with a particular focus on designing effective assessment tasks.

Throughout the year, in grade planning sessions, teachers worked with the support of the principal, assistant principal and teacher coach to incorporate aspects of the Quality Teaching Framework into their teaching and planning of assessment tasks.

In 2006, Our Lady of the Rosary utilised the new diocesan online reporting system. To help with consistency of teacher judgement, teachers met regularly in grade, stage and across stage teams to analyse work samples in line with the new A-E reporting requirements. Three members of the Leadership Team also attended workshops aimed at helping teachers with the new reporting system. Our staff and parent communities were also involved in the diocesan evaluation of this initiative.

### 5.3 Significant Initiatives

In order to be able to contribute to building a preferred future, it is vital that the children learn how to learn and learn about themselves as learners, including how their brains work.

Throughout the year, teachers worked to further develop and refine strategies for infusing deep thinking into learning in all Key Learning Areas. Some aspects of this initiative included:

- the school's focus on providing quality feedback and empowering children to think about and reflect upon their own learning through developing criteria for quality work; and
- teaching the children how to ask powerful questions.

In 2006, teachers planned together to further develop and refine units of work for each grade which would involve authentic inquiry across the curriculum into an important question or issue.

#### **Our Lady of the Rosary Language Project**

In 2006 Our Lady of the Rosary was successful in gaining a grant for a diocesan

language project. This allowed a speech pathologist to work with small groups of Kindergarten and Year 1 students in the classroom on specific needs-based activities. At least one of these sessions was videoed and became a focus for subsequent professional discussion and planning with these children's class teachers.

The school also trialled an early morning literacy group for students who did not participate in the Reading Recovery Program, yet still needed extra support in literacy. Four mornings per week for Terms 3 and 4 up to 10 children worked with the Assistant Principal, the teacher coach and, at times, the Reading Recovery teacher, to develop extra confidence and competence in basic literacy skills.

#### **Focus on Spelling**

Staff continued their focus on improving students' skills in spelling by spending two days of staff development time researching current best practice in the teaching of spelling. This culminated in the development of a revised spelling policy. The new draft policy and suggested homework activities were shared with parents in a "Spelling Morning" in Term Four.

Throughout 2006, Kindergarten and Year 1 teachers had the opportunity to work with an external numeracy consultant. The consultant's focus was on assessing the numeracy skills of our early years students, and planning open-ended tasks which could meet the identified needs of the students within the time available. Students met with the consultant regularly throughout the year and the consultant used ongoing progressive assessment tasks as a measure of student achievement.

#### **Supporting Kindergarten**

In 2006, our Kindergarten Orientation program was further developed to allow the children a more settled start to the year. Kindergarten students arrived on the first day already knowing their Year 5 buddies, after spending time with them in structured play situations at the end of the previous year. These relationships continued to



develop throughout the year with a number of planned and spontaneous activities.

In Term 1, Year 5 and Kindergarten buddies enjoyed a Teddy Bears' picnic together, as well as the Blokes and Buddies BBQ later in the year with their dads. The buddies sat together for all school liturgies and masses throughout the year, and were regularly involved in buddy writing, dance and reading activities.

### Gifted and Talented Enrichment

Throughout 2006, two members of the staff Leadership Team undertook an action research project with a focus on using improved questioning to address underachievement of gifted and talented students in their Year 5 and Year 2 classes during Readers' Circle. The project involved the two teachers observing each other's practice and analysing their use of questioning and students' response to these questions. The teachers worked with the support of their teacher coach to refine their practice to better extend student thinking and deepen their comprehension of readers' circle texts.

## 5.4 Student Achievement

The 2006 Basic Skills Test results continue to show the trend of decreasing the number of children in Bands 1 and 2 (the lowest bands) and conversely the trend of increasing the number of children in the highest bands. This trend is the same in both Years 3 and 5 in both overall literacy and numeracy. There was once again an improvement in the numeracy results this year, reflecting the school's continued focus on improving numeracy learning and teaching.

### Literacy

Literacy, embracing critical and information literacy, continues to be a major focus at Our Lady of the Rosary with a daily two hour literacy block across the grades.

In Year 3, 2006 there were 58 students who sat for the Basic Skills test (BST). The table below shows the percentage of students in Year 3 who achieved each band at the school and also in the state.

Skill Band	Our Lady of the Rosary students %	State %
5	43	14
4	36	28
3	12	32
2	9	19
1	0	8

**79% of our students achieved the top two bands compared to 42% across the state (Bands 4 and 5).**

The following table compares Year 3 student performance in literacy (reading and language) to statewide performance and illustrates trends in student performance over time.

Since 2002, the average scaled score for Our Lady of the Rosary has remained consistently above the state scaled score.

Year 3 Literacy		
Year	School	State
2002	55.0	50.6
2003	57.1	50.6
2004	54.8	50.5
2005	55.7	50.8
2006	55.8	50.7

### Writing

In Year 3, 2006 there were 58 students who sat for the Basic Skills test (BST). The table below shows the percentage of students in Year 3 who achieved each band at the school and also in the state.

Band	School	State
5	52	13
4	28	25
3	16	36
2	3	18
1	2	7

**80% of our students achieved the top two bands compared to 38% across the state (Bands 4 and 5).**



The following table compares Year 3 student performance in writing to statewide performance and illustrates trends in student performance over time. Since 2002 the average scaled score for Our Lady of the Rosary has remained consistently above the state scaled score.

Year 3 Writing		
Year	School	State
2002	56.1	51.5
2003	55.2	51.1
2004	54.1	51.2
2005	53.5	50.1
2006	56.1	50.2

In **Year 5**, 2006 there were 59 students who sat for the Basic Skills test (BST). The table below shows the percentage of students in Year 5 who achieved each band at both the school and also in the state.

Skill Band	Our Lady of the Rosary students %	State %
6	36	22
5	39	28
4	17	29
3	5	14
2	3	5
1	0	1

75% of our students achieved the top two bands compared to 50% across the state (Bands 5 and 6).

The following table compares Year 5 student performance in writing, reading, language and literacy, to statewide performance and illustrates trends in student performance over time.

Since 2002, the average scaled score for Our Lady of the Rosary has remained consistently above the state scaled score.

Year 5 Literacy		
Year	School	State
2002	61.1	57.8
2003	63.1	57.5
2004	60.2	57.4
2005	60.6	57.0
2006	59.6	57.3

In **Year 5**, 2006 there were 59 students who sat for the Basic Skills test (BST). The table below shows the percentage of students in Year 5 who achieved each band at both the school and also in the state.

Skill Band	Our Lady of the Rosary students %	State %
6	36	20
5	44	31
4	10	25
3	8	17
2	2	5
1	0	2

**80% of our students achieved the top two bands compared to 51% across the state (Bands 5 and 6).**

The following table compares Year 5 student performance in writing to statewide performance and illustrates trends in student performance over time. Since 2002, the average scaled score for Our Lady of the Rosary was well above state average.

Year 5 Writing		
Year	School	State
2002	61.3	57.1
2003	60.0	56.4
2004	60.0	56.6
2005	59.3	56.2
2006	59.6	56.7

### Numeracy

The school believes that numeracy is the integrated use of mathematics across the curriculum and embraces the skills of analysis, thinking and the ability to communicate ideas by posing, formulating, solving and evaluating problems.



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Skill Band	Our Lady of the Rosary students %	State %
5	53	22
4	19	24
3	19	26
2	5	19
1	3	9

**72% of our students achieved the top two bands compared to 46% across the state (Bands 4 and 5).**

The following table compares Year 3 student performance in literacy (reading and language) to statewide performance and illustrates trends in student performance over time. Since 2002, the average scaled score for Our Lady of the Rosary has increased relative to the statewide score since 2004.

Year 3 Numeracy		
Year	School	State
2002	56.4	53.0
2003	61.3	52.8
2004	55.2	52.3
2005	58.2	53.6
2006	60.3	53.3

In **Year 5**, 2006 there were 59 students who sat for the Basic Skills test (BST). The table below shows the percentage of students in Year 5 who achieved each band at both the school and also in the state.

Skill Band	Our Lady of the Rosary students %	State %
6	54	30
5	20	26
4	15	24
3	7	15
2	3	5
1	0	1

**74% of our students achieved the top two bands compared to 56% across the state (Bands 5 and 6).**

The following table compares Year 5 student performance in literacy (reading and language) to statewide performance and illustrates trends in student performance over time. Since 2002, the average scaled score for Our Lady of the Rosary has remained above the statewide average.

Year 5 Numeracy		
Year	School	State
2002	63.0	60.2
2003	64.6	60.0
2004	62.7	60.7
2005	63.7	60.4
2006	64.8	61.5

**Reporting Value-Added (Learning Gain)**

The scores in the table below indicate the **average growth** achieved by students who sat for the BST in 2004 as Year 3 students and again in 2006 as Year 5 students, in literacy (reading and language), writing and numeracy at Our Lady of the Rosary and for the same cohort of students in the state. The expected growth in BST scores is between 6-7.

The following table indicates that this cohort of students demonstrated the expected growth in writing but failed to make the expected growth in literacy and numeracy.

*Table 1: Average Growth achieved by students who sat for the BST in 2004 as Year 3 students and again in 2006 as Year 5 students.*

2006	School	State
Literacy (Reading and Language)	4.6	6.81
Writing	5.6	5.6
Numeracy	9.2	9.3

The Commonwealth Government has developed national benchmarks that describe the minimum acceptable standards for Year 3 and 5 students for reading, writing and numeracy.



The following two tables outline the percentage of students in Year 3 and Year 5 who have surpassed the national benchmarks since the school has had access to this data.

*Table 2: Percentage of Students in Year 3 who have surpassed the National Benchmarks since the school has had access to this data*

	Reading	Writing	Numeracy
2006	100%	98%	98%
2005	100%	96%	100%
2004	95%	N/A	95%

*Table 3: Percentage of Students in Year 5 who have surpassed the National Benchmarks since the school has had access to this data*

	Reading	Writing	Numeracy
2006	93%	97%	97%
2005	98%	98%	100%
2004	98%	N/A	98%

### Reporting on Targets for 2006

In numeracy:

- The Year 3 2006 results showed an increase of 20% for students gaining results in the top band, Band 5. We also achieved a reduction of 15% in the number of students scoring in the lowest band.
- The Year 5 2006 cohort achieved a 10% increase in the number of students scoring in the top band.

A focus on spelling, both professionally for staff, and in the classroom for children, resulted in more children exhibiting greater spelling skills Year 3. In Year 5, a greater proportion of our students scored in the top two bands for spelling in the writing component of the BST.

For 2006, one of our targets was to increase our representation in the top two bands of the Basic Skills test in both Year 3 and Year 5. Our achievements were as follows:

- 14% greater representation in Bands 4 and 5, the highest two bands for Year 3 in numeracy.
- 18% greater representation in Bands 4 and 5, the highest two bands for Year 3 in literacy.
- 3% greater representation in Bands 5 and 6, the highest two bands for Year 5 in numeracy.
- 1% greater representation in Bands 5 and 6, the highest two bands for Year 5 in literacy.

### Targets for 2007

Our targets for 2007 will be:

- continued improvement in student achievement in numeracy in both Years 3 and 5;
- continued improvement in student achievement in the spelling component of the BST in literacy;
- improvement in student achievement in the reading and punctuation component of the BST in literacy;
- increasing the percentage of students who make significant learning gains between Year 3 and Year 5 as measured by the BST in both literacy and numeracy; and
- increasing the percentage of students achieving in the two highest bands in both Year 3 and 5 in literacy and numeracy.

### External Competitions

In 2006, students in Years 3 to 6 were offered the opportunity to participate in the University of New South Wales English, Mathematics, Computers, Writing, Spelling and Science Competitions.

In English, 67 students participated and 4 students achieved high distinctions, 6 achieved distinctions and 16 achieved credits.

In Mathematics, 83 students participated and 1 student achieved a high distinction, 8



achieved distinctions and 21 achieved credits.

In Computers, 47 students participated and 1 student achieved a high distinction, 7 achieved distinctions and 6 achieved credits.

In Writing, 59 students participated and 5 students achieved high distinctions, 3 achieved distinctions and 11 achieved credits.

In Spelling, 67 students participated and 1 student achieved a high distinction, 7 achieved distinctions and 16 achieved credits.

In Science, 48 students participated and 2 students achieved high distinctions, 9 achieved distinctions and 7 achieved credits.

## 5.5 Information, Communication and Learning Technologies (ICLT)

In line with the school technology plan, in 2006 the school purchased a variety of technology to embed ICLT as a tool for powerful learning in the digital age. Once again, the numbers of laptops and data projectors were increased throughout the year, including the purchase of two laptop trolleys for the upper and lower floors, allowing easier access to these resources. A set of portable speakers was purchased for each data projector, alleviating the need for a TV to view movies. Purchase of a DVD recorder for the library meant that educational shows, such as *Behind the News*, could also be viewed using the projector. The use of Apple Extreme Wireless stations enabled infant classes to utilise the wireless internet in the school and each infant grade also received a laptop to accompany their data projectors. Receiving another Commonwealth Bank E-Learning Grant at the end of 2005 enabled the school to raise technology ratios so that in 2006, each class had a digital camera, and each grade had a digital scanner.

Throughout 2006, optional "Tekky Brekkies" for staff continued to focus on learning about the implementation and potential of CASTnet to support learning. The staff discussed minimum skill level expectations for students

in each grade based upon stage outcomes and available technology. The staff worked individually with the ICLT facilitator to find ways to meet ICLT expectations. This will continue to be a focus in 2007.

Two staff members accompanied the ICLT facilitator to a diocesan-wide Learning and Teaching Technology conference which included internationally renowned speakers and a variety of presentations highlighting the possibilities of different technologies in the classroom. Several ideas were taken back to the school to be implemented from this conference, one of which resulted in the school's purchase of a dozen i-pods to help commence an audio book program in the library for reluctant readers. A member of staff also attended an intensive in-service on the Clicker program, which is now being used in Learning Support and some infant classes.

The Year 6 Technology Team of 2006 introduced DVDs of grade assemblies for parents, which has made it possible to capture and share these special occasions with family members. On average, over 40 families in each grade asked for copies of these DVDs. By using i-dvd software that was included with the new Apple MacBooks purchased in 2006, the team was able to create a highly professional result which thrilled students and parents alike. We will attempt to continue this initiative in 2007.

In 2006, the inaugural Diocesan Kids Congress was held for Year 5 students. This authentic, inter-school, 21st century learning and teaching experience designed *by kids for kids* exposed children to the exciting possibilities of podcasting and resulted in research and production of technology based work around the issue of animal cruelty.

At Our Lady of the Rosary, students use CASTnet to communicate and access their learning both at school and at home. 2006 saw an increase in the use of email by students, particularly in Year 6. Teachers continued to use CASTnet as a means of improving communication within the school and between home and school, and have been working on the goal of updating each



grade's class page at least once a week. The school also uses CASTnet to disseminate information to parents and to collect their comments on a variety of issues using forums. The Parent Page on CASTnet continued to grow with contributions from the P&F. Feedback from parents show that this page is more regularly accessed, especially to read the weekly Our Lady of the Rosary Newsletter. Due to the great efforts of the Physical Education Specialist teacher, parents also regularly accessed the Sports Page, which listed details of representative teams as well as the criteria from which teams were selected.

We continue working with the Catholic Schools Office to upgrade the technology infrastructure at Our Lady of the Rosary during 2007 ensuring improved maintenance, better connection and a high level of support for staff. Together as a staff we will continue to explore and develop our collective understanding of the internet and possibilities of learning in a technology rich learning environment.

## 5.6 Professional Learning

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

Active engagement in a wide variety of professional learning activities was again a feature of the professional life of Our Lady of the Rosary staff. All members of staff are committed to continuously improving their teaching and do this by attending regular staff meetings, meeting in their learning teams to reflect together, and attending professional development courses or conferences outside of the school that will benefit the whole community.

In 2006, three members of the school leadership team joined staff from across the diocese, in the Broken Bay Pedagogy Initiative, to work with an educational consultant from the University of Newcastle for three days to learn about the Quality Teaching Framework. This learning was shared with staff throughout the year in staff and team meetings, after an initial half day introduction for each staff member. The QTF

has helped staff to develop a shared language with which they can discuss quality teaching and learning, and use when planning inquiry units and assessment tasks.

Conferences and courses often take place during school holidays, on weekends or after school and are well attended by staff.

The school was also asked to be a pilot school for the new diocesan IT architecture, which enabled two staff members to engage in ongoing professional development in regular half day meetings.

Fifteen staff also attended an afternoon workshop with a consultant aimed at helping teachers develop greater skill and confidence in better using co-operative learning strategies, thinking skills and aspects of the Quality Teaching Framework. A number of staff also attended optional after-school workshops on podcasting (12) and the use of smartboards in the classroom (6).

Throughout 2006, optional "Tekky Brekkies" for staff continued to focus on learning about the implementation and potential of CASTnet (our diocesan intranet) to support learning. These were well attended by staff.

Three staff members attended the four-day basic week in Choice Theory and Reality Therapy and Lead Management, and one teacher deepened his understandings by engaging in a Basic Practicum in Choice Theory.

Our Sport teacher attended the 'Rock and Water' Conference before leading this course with many boys from the upper grades, and the Assistant Principal attended two days of PART (Physical Assault Response Training).

Deepening early literacy understandings was the focus of two NSW Department of Education full day inservices held in the city by internationally renowned experts. A total of ten staff attended one of two sessions entitled "Engaging the Learner in Becoming Literate" and three staff members attended a later one on "Helping Struggling Readers". Three staff members undertook training in administering the Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement, while a further seven staff members attended an extension



afternoon offered by the diocese with the aim of meeting the identified needs of our early literacy learners, through targeted reading and writing programs.

The average expenditure on professional learning per teacher in 2006 was \$1,500.



## 6. Extracurricular Program

Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic School is committed to offering a variety of opportunities to cater for children's needs and interests.

### Sport

Spirit-filled sporting carnivals were enjoyed by the school in 2006. These carnivals allowed for children to be selected for the North Shore Schools' Cluster level carnivals. 65 students attended the North Shore Cluster Cross Country Carnival and for the second year in a row, Our Lady of the Rosary won the carnival. The school had a representative team of 32 students who went on to participate at diocesan level.

Sport is a significant part of life at Our Lady of the Rosary, and children had the opportunity to be involved in a variety of opportunities such as the Gala Days in basketball and soccer. For the second consecutive time, Our Lady of the Rosary won the North Shore Cluster Athletics Carnival. Our Lady of the Rosary was well represented at Diocesan and Polding (inter-Diocesan) level this year in Swimming, Athletics, and Cross Country carnivals as well as individual sports.

### Creative Arts

The children's special grade assemblies have been another opportunity for them to showcase their talents in drama, music and dance and have been of a very high standard.

### Music Groups

2006 saw the school band and choir performing at various community and school functions and liturgies. This year, the Our Lady of the Rosary Choir also received a Highly Commended at the Ryde Choral Eisteddfod. The Our Lady of the Rosary Band continues to perform at significant occasions of our school calendar, such as the Father's Day Breakfast. Their performances were always very well received by the community.

### Private Music Lessons

A significant number of students once again took the opportunity in 2006 to work with music tutors at Our Lady of the Rosary, who provide private lessons in violin and lessons in the various band instruments as part of the school band programme.

### Extracurricular Activities

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

- the Year 6 Diocesan Public Speaking Competition;
- an inter-school chess competition;
- the Maths Olympiad;
- Thursday Skills Day at lunch times; and
- Taikwondo, which a significant number of children have taken up the option of learning, with a private tutor who teaches the children once per week in the school hall.





## 7. Strategic Initiatives

### 7.1 2006 Priorities and Achievements

Throughout 2006, a team of staff worked with an outside consultant, a highly experienced educational psychologist and training consultant who is a senior faculty member in the Glasser Institute, to refine our Quality Behaviour Policy. This involved the team working together at various times throughout the year, seeking feedback from staff, collecting data and ultimately finalising a new Pastoral Care Policy for the school.

In 2006, staff continued to work together to research best practice in learning and teaching spelling, as this was an identified area of need from Basic Skills Test results. This involved staff analysing these results and those from other standardised tests, and designing learning experiences aimed at improving these results. The significant shared learning from this focus now forms the basis of the school's approach to spelling, as outlined in the new Spelling Policy.

Our Year 6 teachers in 2006 trialled a new approach to homework, taking on the idea of Ian Lillico's Homework Grid, which incorporates many aspects of family life, encouraging children to engage in family outings and physical activities. They utilised the diocesan intranet to engage parents in an online forum about the success of the trial, and received overwhelming parent support. This parent and teacher feedback will inform our discussions in 2007 as we look to review our Homework Policy.

In 2006, Our Lady of the Rosary initiated the national 10 000 Steps program in the school community, with the support of a committed parent. Children and teachers from Kindergarten to Year 6 took up the challenge, wearing pedometers during the day and charting their activity levels. We were also fortunate to be able to begin an Active After School Communities program for students, after successfully gaining a grant for this initiative. A parent co-ordinator initially organised this program, and subsequently five teachers were trained to

join the program, which will continue to be a focus for 2007.

Engaging all learners is a priority at Our Lady of the Rosary and in 2006, one teacher ran two separate Rock and Water programs for boys in senior classes. These were very well attended by the boys with the aim of developing self-control, self-confidence, self-awareness and self-reflection. The program received very positive feedback from the students, with significant growth in pre- and post- program survey data for all students.

Two teachers also engaged in an action research project with the Education Officer-Gifted and Talented from the Catholic Schools Office. These two teachers supported each other in refining and developing their questioning skills to better engage all learners in discussions of texts read in Readers' Circle. These learnings were then shared with other teachers from across the diocese. As a way of engaging reluctant readers more readily in reading, the school invested, in 2006, in 12 ipod shuffles, onto which we have begun downloading books so that children experiencing difficulty or lacking motivation in reading, can still develop a love of good literature. These are loaned through the school library, to particular students, on the recommendation of teachers.

2006 saw a visible increase in the profile of Visual Arts in the school, with year round displays around the school, changing regularly to reflect the learning in classrooms. Of particular note was the Year 6 mini Archibald competition which was very well received by the school community. This focus on raising the profile of Visual Arts in the school will be continued and extended in 2007.

### 7.2 2007 Priorities and Challenges

In Term 3, 2007, the staff of Our Lady of the Rosary will participate in Tier 2 of the School Review process. Preparing for the two day event will engage all staff, students and the parent body in reflection on the past and planning for the future.



Engaging learners is critical for quality learning. In particular, in 2007 Our Lady of the Rosary will focus on developing strategies and implementing initiatives designed to deepen the level of engagement of all students, but especially boys, in learning experiences. Extensive professional development will be undertaken in the Quality Teaching Framework. The learnings gained will be used to enrich all experiences for children.

As part of the school's ongoing commitment to enabling learning in the digital age, strategies for further embedding Information Communication and Learning Technologies (ICLT) as a tool for powerful learning will continue to be developed, as will the capabilities of CASTnet to further enhance communication between home and school.

Focussed development of teaching and assessing Mathematics will occur throughout 2007. The professional development undertaken in spelling during 2006 will continue to be applied as a whole school approach to the teaching of spelling in 2007.

The newly written Pastoral Care Policy will be launched to the whole school community during 2007.



## 8. Parent Participation

### 8.1 Introduction

Parents are actively involved in the life of Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic School in many ways, including helping in the classroom and on excursions, coaching and supporting sport teams, helping in the canteen and on the various Parents' and Friends' committees.

Building community is a major focus of the P&F. Functions organized by the Social Committee included the two children's discos which were well supported by both the children and by the parent supervisors, and the annual Mother's Day Morning Tea and Father's Day Breakfast which once again were successful and significant events on the whole school calendar.

The major fundraising and social event was the Our Lady of the Rosary Trivia Night, the funds from which went to continuing the P & F's commitment to supporting the school's technology plan. Through the generosity of the parents technology resources have been purchased that are being well used to support learning in the classroom, in particular laptop trolleys and data projectors for use in all classrooms. This support has been greatly appreciated and critical in enabling the implementation of the strategic plan in the area of ICLT. The Kindergarten and Year 1 and 2 classrooms have now also been air conditioned through the generous support of P&F fundraising initiatives.

The first Our Lady of the Rosary 'Gingerbread House Night' was held in December as a fundraising/social event for our mums and significant other females in the community. It was attended by well over 100 people and the night was fun and lively with a number of the mums spending weeks prior to the evening rehearsing as a band, so they could entertain the gathered group of women on the night, while they were making and decorating gingerbread houses for their loved ones. The night was such a success it will be continued in 2007.

One of the major goals of the Strategic Plan was to increase the opportunities for dads, and other significant men in the lives of the students, to participate more fully in the life of the school. This year the Men at School program, co-ordinated by a team of parents, has again been very successful in doing that. As part of the Men at School program, the Men in the Morning initiative provided the students with opportunities to be involved in a wide range of activities with dads and sometimes grandads before school twice per term. The Blokes and Buddies Barbeque at the beginning of the year for Year 5 children, their Kindergarten buddies and their dads, was a great success and also welcomed new dads and grandads to the school community. A number of dads was also able to stay after the annual Father's Day Breakfast to visit their children's classes to read or tell stories to the children. It provided the children with a valuable opportunity to see that dads value reading, which is so important to all children, but especially our boys.

Educational get-togethers for parents were well attended in 2006. A series of morning workshops for parents of children in Year 1 was held early in the year, as the parent component of the APEEL program, in which the children were involved. Our yearly 8 hour early literacy course was so well attended in 2006 that we held both a morning and evening course, which allowed a greater number of parents to attend, including some of our dads. The evening for parents on personal development for children in Years 4, 5 and 6 was also well attended.

### 8.2 Parent Satisfaction

No data was collected to determine parent satisfaction in 2006. The school Leadership team has committed to collecting data relevant to this area in 2007.



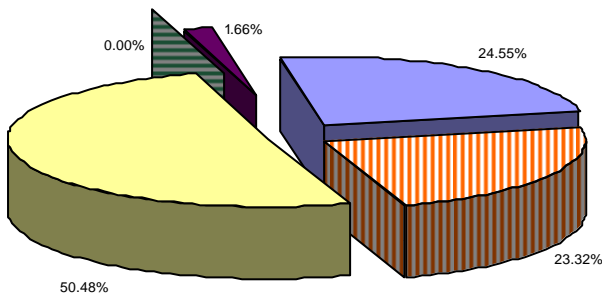
## 9. Financial Report

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.

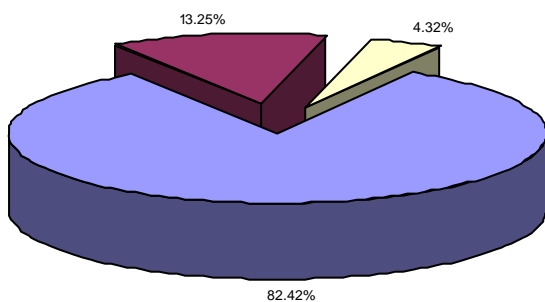
### Income

- 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, Michelle Smith.