

St Bernard's Catholic Primary School Berowra Heights

2010 Annual Report



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1. Message from Our School Community

1.1 Message from the Principal

St Bernard's Catholic Primary School Berowra Heights is within the Parish of Ku-Ring-Gai Chase and is a community committed to inspiring one another to grow in faith, hope, love, respect, justice and joy. The School's motto, "*Honesty*", encourages us to celebrate our faith by giving witness to the Gospel values within a caring and supportive community.

Many successes were celebrated throughout 2010 demonstrating the quality of teaching and learning, the vibrant expression of the Catholic faith and the outstanding commitment of the parent community.

We welcomed the new Assistant Priest to the parish and school community during 2010 and are very grateful for his presence and support.

The new buildings were officially opened in 2010 and have proved to be a wonderful asset.

The results of a community wide Satisfaction Survey conducted late in 2010 affirm much of the wonderful work which has taken place during this year and will be used to guide us in determining the goals for 2011.

This Annual Report for 2010 is a key component of our school's accountability to our community. It is a detailed record of our school's achievements and challenges for the year and provides many insights into the life of this outstanding community.

1.2 Message from the Parent Body

Our continued focus in 2010 was to:

- Provide a parental perspective to assist our Principal
- Raise funds through social and fundraising events to enrich the School
- Encourage and welcome any contribution that might enhance our community

We pride ourselves on being a welcoming community and we extended this to our new families at a number of social and fundraising events held during the course of the year. These funds were used to assist with the purchase of new computers, interactive whiteboards, microphone and amphitheatre lighting.

The parent community played an integral part in supporting the school's implementation of the Positive Behaviors for Learning (PBL) framework.

At St Bernard's we are truly blessed with great families who are consistently giving up their time to assist with grounds maintenance at working bees, uniform shop, canteen, and classroom needs. I thank all involved in our community for their contribution.

The P&F President

1.3 Message from the Student Body

As school captains we are very proud of all that we achieved throughout 2010. It was a very exciting year which started with the move into new buildings. Special responsibilities for us included: encouraging all students to obey the newly developed School Rules; leading the weekly assembly; participating in the Gateway program; the Year 6 Cluster Mass; the Young Leaders Day and fundraising for charities and our farewell.

Some of our best memories in 2010 include: sporting events, the school disco, Life Saving skills program and the trip to Canberra. We will always remember St Bernard's as a place where we were given many opportunities to learn and have fun!

The School and Colour House Captains 2010



2. School Profile

2.1 Student Profile

The following information describes the student profile for 2010:

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Indigenous	Total
108	116	0	0	224

*Language background other than English

2.2 Enrolment Policy

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

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

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

2.3 Staff Profile

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

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

a	b	c	Total
19	0	0	19

Further information about the staff profile can be found in the School Facts section of the school's profile page on the *My School* website.

2.4 Teacher Attendance and Retention Rates

The average teacher attendance rate during 2010 was 96%. This figure does not include teachers on planned leave.

The teacher retention rate from 2009 to 2010 was 100%.

2.5 Teacher Satisfaction

In 2010 Research Australia Development and Innovation Institute (RADII) were commissioned to undertake a survey across the community with the results of the Staff Survey indicating a very high level of satisfaction. The results of this survey, combined with survey data gathered by the Leadership Team (both written and verbal), enable the following statement.



Staff indicated that they strongly valued and/or affirmed St Bernard's as student centred and supportive and an environment where faith is nurtured. All staff agreed that the wellbeing, learning and growth of students is promoted and that the school has a strong commitment to pastoral care of all members of the community. Students' achievements are appropriately acknowledged and celebrated and parent involvement in the school is encouraged, visible and valued. The powerful effect of teachers work practices on student outcomes was overwhelmingly acknowledged and all agree that the school values the contributions of its teachers.

2.6 Student Attendance and Retention Rates

Year	Average student attendance rate (%)
K	95
1	92
2	94
3	95
4	97
5	97
6	94

The average student attendance rate for 2010 was 94%.

Management of non-attendance: In order for students to reach their full potential it is of paramount importance that they attend school regularly. While it is the parents' legal responsibility under the Education Act to ensure that their children attend school regularly, our staff as part of their duty of care, monitor all absences and work in partnership with parents to support and promote the regular attendance of students. In doing so the school, under the leadership of the principal:

- provides a caring environment which fosters in students, a sense of wellbeing and belonging
- maintains accurate records of student attendance
- implements policies and procedures to monitor student attendance and to address non-attendance issues as and when they arise
- communicates to parents and students, the school's expectations with regard to student attendance and the consequences of not meeting these expectations
- recognises and rewards excellent and improved student attendance.

School attendance records also contain information regarding student absences including reasons for absence and documentation to substantiate reasons for absences. Teachers are required to monitor non attendance diligently on a student by student basis and to bring to the attention of the principal immediately any unexplained absences, non attendance of a chronic nature, or reasons for non attendance that cause concern. Matters of concern are referred to the principal, the Catholic Schools Office and the relevant Department of Education and Training officer where appropriate.



Where a student is not able to attend school for a prolonged period of time due to a medical condition or illness, the school in collaboration with parents provides resources to contribute to the student's continuum of learning where possible.

The Catholic Schools Office (CSO) monitors each school's compliance with student attendance and management of non attendance on an annual basis as a minimum, as part of the system's School Review and Development processes.

2.7 Student Satisfaction

Results of the 45 (out of a possible 56) Years 5 and 6 students whom responded to the RADII Student Survey indicated a high level of satisfaction. The students indicated a deep understanding of the school rules and a respectful connection to the environment. Students strongly endorsed their relationships with staff members and the supportive and nurturing context in which learning takes places. Students indicated that they felt their learning was valued by their teachers and that they were both congratulated and given feedback on this learning. Students identified the opportunities provided to engage with environmental and social initiatives as highlights of their school life.

The student body also strongly endorsed the Student Representative Council and the Student Leadership Team as avenues to communicate their ideas and thoughts about the school.



3. Catholic Life and Mission

3.1 Catholic Heritage

St Bernard's was established by the Sisters of Mercy in 1971. The Mercy tradition of holistic education for life continues at St Bernard's through the practical opportunities for demonstration of faith, hope, love and honesty in an unashamedly Catholic environment.

The *Catholic Life and Mission* goals drawn from the *Strategic Plan 2007-2010*, features of which were specifically attended to in the Annual Plan 2010, included regular and meaningful opportunities to: enhance and further grow staff spirituality through nurturing pastoral relationships across the entire community and the continued purposeful implementation of the PBL framework.

Strategies used to achieve these goals included: participation in Ministry for Teachers 1; an overnight staff retreat; continued encouragement of and opportunities for full, active and conscious participation of the children in weekend and school Masses; the establishment of a PBL committee with opportunities to feed into policies and processes; professional development for the whole community around the behaviour expectations of this framework aligned to the Gospel values of equity, tolerance and inclusivity and, participation in social justice initiatives.

Parents and students are constantly reminded of the Catholic identity and mission of the school and the expectation that they will assist in that mission—an indicator of progress in the Bishops' Pastoral Letter – "Catholic Schools at a Crossroads".

Further information on the history and heritage of our school can be found on the School's website at: www.sbbdbb.catholic.edu.au

3.2 Religious Life of the School

A strong emphasis is placed on the religious and liturgical life of the community:

- Years 2 (39) and 3 (25) children undertook their Reconciliation, Confirmation and/or First Eucharist. These children were well supported through the Parish Sacramental Programme and the classroom teaching and learning opportunities of the diocesan modules
- participation in weekly parish Mass for all students
- Years 4-6 experience opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation twice annually
- weekly Staff Prayer
- the School Prayer and Song are prayed each week
- parent prayer is connected to the Liturgical Seasons of the Church
- celebrating the Sacraments, particularly when received for the first time, through the giving of a memento and acknowledgement at assembly
- prayer spaces are prominent in classrooms, offices and the foyer
- prominence given to the memory and legacy of St Mary MacKillop of the Cross
- icons of St Bernard are displayed around the school

3.3 Catholic Worldview

All religious activity/experience is shaped to enhance the community's understanding and responsibility as committed members of this faith community. All members are expected to be committed to ever becoming disciples of Jesus.

Social justice activities were aligned to the mission of the Church. Specific examples from 2010 include: St Vincent de Paul Winter Appeal, Mission Week activities, awareness of and financial



support for Caritas; renewed emphasis on the 'care freezer' (parent pastoral care) and the annual Christmas appeal to support needy families in our community and elsewhere.

The Religious Education modules have proven a successful vehicle for demonstrating our responsibility as baptised Catholics to extend hospitality to others. The Years 4-6 undertook a project in collaboration with an Aged Care facility and decorated cards and wrote letters to elderly people.

Parent welcoming and inclusion rituals were again a high priority in 2010. The most notable were: Tea and Tissues, Trivia Night, Working Bees, Kindergarten Playgroup, Walkabout and social activities.

Donations were made to Christmas Hampers which were distributed through St Vincent de Paul.

3.4 Professional Learning in Catholic Life and Mission

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

Five staff members were engaged throughout 2010 in furthering their studies in Religious Education/ Theology. Three staff members attended the Diocese's Ministry for Teachers 1 course.

The Staff Spirituality Day centred on re-engaging with the School's Mission and Vision statement and ensuring collaborative ownership of such. The Parish Priest and Catholic Schools Office (CSO) Education Officer (Mission Services), along with the school's principal facilitated the day.

The staff at St Bernard's, as was evidenced from the RADII data, is committed to our Bishop's call and commitment to engage actively in promoting our Catholic identity and character. The staff members of St Bernard's are excellent role models for the students in their care.



4. Pastoral Care

4.1 Diocesan Policies

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

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

4.2 School Implementation of Diocesan Policy

The School's pastoral care policies and practices are evident in the strategic and annual plans and are at the forefront of all that is promoted across the community. The PBL framework permeates decision making at all levels of the community: Respect for Self, Respect for Others and Respect for the Environment.

Within the PBL framework is the ongoing development and implementation of an award structure which affirms and encourages appropriate behaviour. This structure includes: Reasons to Smile, Merit Awards and the prestigious St Bernard's Award. The various awards are designed to impact positively upon the learning and wellbeing of the students so that an environment is created where students feel their needs can be met in a safe and supported way.

4.3 Pastoral Care of Families

There are a number of initiatives operating within the community which are designed to ensure the pastoral needs of families are met:

- Class Parents liaising with teachers and parents to inform about the needs of the whole community
- Parents participating in charity events are supported by the school community
- Parents contribute to 'stocking' the 'Care freezer' with meals for families in times of need/ crisis
- The annual Christmas appeal fundraising is distributed amongst needy families
- All referrals for counselling are treated sensitively and confidentially and followed up with all involved
- Parents liaise with parish personnel when planning weekend Masses, sacramental celebrations and liturgies
- The principal is supportive of financial reductions for hardship during times of need.

4.4 Resolving Issues

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

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

4.5 Occupational Health and Safety

Each school is required to implement and comply with the Diocesan School System Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS). This system reflects the current statutory requirements for OHS and complies with the Australian Standard for OHS Management Systems. The OHSMS adopted by the CSO for Broken Bay Systemic Schools has been designed to address general health, safety and welfare matters and also to take account of specific issues that apply to school communities. The management system supports the provision of a 'safe and supportive' environment for all students as well as taking into account the health, safety and welfare of staff, visitors and contractors to the school site.



Principals, in consultation with the relevant CSO personnel, are responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with OHS legislation and for the implementation of the management system in keeping with the Catholic Schools Office's Annual OHS Plan. External OHS system audits are conducted across a sample of schools each year to validate the implementation of the management system.



5. Excellence in Teaching and Learning

5.1 Quality Teaching and Learning

St Bernard's has regarded Integrated Units of Learning to be a highly valued component of the overall quality teaching and learning structure K-6. During 2010 staff determined the need to review the relevance and appropriateness of these units with the unveiling of the Australian Curriculum. To this end, all staff members participated in professional development on the four draft curriculum documents.

The Clinical Assessment for Numeracy tool was identified as extremely valuable for identifying at risk students across K-4. A structure was developed to ensure those students were further assessed and their needs addressed through teaching programs. Support for accurate and refined analysis of this tool has been a major focus for professional learning in 2010.

The Gateway initiative supported Year 6 students whose particular talents in Science and Visual Arts deemed them worthy of participating in a forum to engage in learning activities and discussions with their peers.

The school's intranet has proven to be a successful vehicle for encouraging staff dialogue focused on priority areas aligned to raising student growth most specifically in spelling and numeracy.

During 2010 a Dance program was trialled, employing the services of a dance teacher and this proved highly successful.

The whole school was involved in a Musical- Joseph and the Technicolour Dreamcoat. There were four 'sold-out' performances of this show and it was widely acclaimed as a wonderful community building event.

During 2010 there was greater focus on embracing the potential of sustainability initiatives and three staff members formed the 'Green Groupies' and worked in collaboration with the Student Representative Committee to enhance the community's knowledge and understanding of their role as stewards of this earth. Several staff and students attended professional development and a thriving vegetable garden and composting system have resulted.

5.2 Student Achievement

Students in Years 3 and 5 sat the *National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy* (NAPLAN) in May this year. NAPLAN assessment results provide valuable information about student achievements in literacy and numeracy. Analysis of these results assists school planning and is used to support teaching and learning programs.

Several points should be noted:

- **In Year 3**, students placed in Band 1 are achieving below the national minimum standard. Students in Band 2 are achieving at the national minimum standard. Students in Bands 3 – 6 are performing at a standard deemed to be above the national minimum standard. Students in Bands 5 and 6 are "at proficiency".
- **In Year 5** students in Band 3 are achieving below the national minimum standard. Students in Band 4 are achieving at the national minimum standard. Students in Bands 5 – 8 are performing above the national minimum standard. Students in Bands 7 and 8 are "at proficiency".
- Students who were exempted from any test were deemed not to have met the national minimum standard in that test area and are not included in band distributions.



- State data for band distributions is sourced from the School Measurement and Reporting Toolkit (SMART), developed by NSW Department of Education and Training. All national data and state figures for the percentage at or above national minimum are sourced from the NAPLAN summary report published by the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA). All school data is sourced from SMART.
- In the 2010 cohort, there were 24 students in Year 3 and 29 students in Year 5.

Detail on school performance is provided in the following tables. Band distributions and percentages of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard are shown separately for Years 3 and 5. Additional information can also be accessed from the *My School* website (<http://www.myschool.edu.au/>).

Band Distributions (%) – Year 3

		Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6 (+)	% at or above national minimum
Reading	State	4	10	15	24	20	28	95
	National	4	10	17	23	22	22	94
	School	0	8	4	29	29	29	100
Writing	State	2	4	11	27	31	25	97
	National	2	5	13	30	30	17	96
	School	0	4	25	33	21	17	100
Spelling	State	4	9	18	24	25	21	94
	National	7	10	18	24	22	16	91
	School	0	0	21	29	42	8	100
Gr. & Punct.	State	6	9	13	19	25	29	94
	National	6	9	15	21	22	25	92
	School	4	0	8	17	38	33	96
Numeracy	State	3	12	24	22	23	15	95
	National	4	11	23	28	20	12	94
	School	0	8	8	48	28	8	100

St Bernard's is able to proudly state that 100% of Year 3 students achieved at or above the National Standards for Reading, Writing, Spelling and Numeracy and 100% of Year 5 students achieved the same standard in Writing, Spelling and Grammar and Punctuation.

The Year 3 data summarised indicated that: 87% of students achieved Bands 4, 5, 6 (3 highest Bands for Year 3) in Reading; 71% of students achieved in the top three bands for Writing; 79% of students achieved in the top three Bands for Spelling; 88% of students achieved in the top three Bands for Grammar and Punctuation; and, 84% of students achieved in the top three Bands for Numeracy. A significant number of students achieved in the top two Bands and their ability will be further encouraged through opportunities to participate in lunchtime clubs and extension groups. A number of students achieving Band 2 will be intensively supported to stretch themselves to attain at least the next highest Band which would be achievable by minimal value added effect.



Band Distributions (%) – Year 5

		Band 3 (-)	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6	Band 7	Band 8 (+)	% at or above national minimum
Reading	State	7	13	24	22	16	17	93
	National	7	14	23	25	18	10	91
	School	10	3	10	17	28	31	90
Writing	State	4	9	21	38	17	10	95
	National	5	11	27	31	17	7	93
	School	0	3	17	38	31	10	100
Spelling	State	5	11	22	27	24	12	94
	National	6	12	24	28	19	8	92
	School	0	10	17	28	28	17	100
Gr. & Punct.	State	6	11	20	18	28	17	94
	National	6	11	20	26	21	14	92
	School	0	10	21	17	31	21	100
Numeracy	State	4	12	27	25	18	14	95
	National	5	13	26	28	17	9	94
	School	3	14	21	21	28	14	97

The Year 5 data summarised indicated that: 76% of students achieved Bands 6, 7 or 8 (top 3 Bands for Year 5) in Reading (of these, 59% were in the top 2 Bands, an average substantially higher than the average of all students in NSW); 79% of students achieved in the top three Bands for Writing; 73% of students achieved in the top three Bands for Spelling; 69% of students achieved in the top three Bands for Grammar and Punctuation; and, 63% of students achieved in the top three Bands for Numeracy. Again, staff recognise the high achievements and have identified opportunities to further extend the top achievers in this cohort.

As a whole, the NAPLAN results support staff's already identified priorities: continue to engage in rich dialogue about the Literacy Block; articulate more clearly intervention strategies; identify appealing stimulus for boys writing; continue the focus on teaching a variety of four modes of spelling; continued administration and analysis of the Clinical Interviews; better and more effective tracking systems; revision of benchmarks and the strategic nomination of work samples.

5.3 Extra Curricula Activities

A diverse extracurricular program continued in 2010. Offerings included the Premier's Reading Challenge, Come on Kids online, Gateway initiative, dance, choir, band, musical instrument classes, debating, and chess. The generous contribution of staff members to organise and supervise these initiatives is much appreciated.

The Dance Troupe performed at several functions during the year and feedback from neighbouring schools about their ability and behaviour whilst at functions has been positive.

The commendations St Bernard's constantly receives about the quality of pastoral care is a well deserved accolade to be celebrated by the whole community.

5.4 Professional Learning

The professional learning opportunities for 2010 were captured through: staff development days, participation in conferences and one day programs, staff meetings and structured conversations during some Release from Face to Face. A concentrated effort was made by the Leadership Team to strategically align professional learning to the Annual Goals.

The Assistant Principal led the evaluation and revision of the school's spelling policy and established the school's intranet as a vehicle to enable effective on-line curriculum conversations.



The Religious Education Coordinator (REC) worked with the CSO Education Officer to draft a common proforma to enhance the teaching of Religious Education across K-6.

The PBL Team continued to implement the school- based Behaviour Management policy. Several staff members attended inservices sympathetic to the PBL philosophy and targeting behaviourally challenged and spectrum students.

Two staff members attended the NAPLAN writing workshop and communicated their learning to the whole staff through a series of staff meetings.

The Coordinator 1 continued to drive the focus on Numeracy, ensuring all teachers were confident and competent in administering the Clinical Interview and working with the Assistant Principal to further develop tracking systems.

All staff engaged with professional development on the four draft curriculum of the Australian Curriculum due for release in 2011. One staff member attended a conference in October focused on the English curriculum.

The ICLT team, in collaboration with the CSO Education Officer (Educational Services), continued to lead several professional learning opportunities designed to upskill staff on integrating IT into all Key Learning Areas (KLAs).

The kindergarten and years 1 and 2 teachers worked intensively with two Education Officers (CSO) to ensure consistency and best practice teaching of Literacy. These staff members have become experts in facilitating Guided Reading and Guided Writing sessions.



6. Strategic Initiatives

6.1 2010 Priorities and Achievements

One of the most important priorities for the whole community was the successful implementation of the PBL framework and the development of lessons resulting in the explicit teaching of the rules whilst maintaining the rigour of the PDHPE curriculum.

A significant achievement for 2010 was the development of processes for recording, analysing and actioning feedback of data.

6.2 2011 Priorities and Challenges

To strategically plan how to determine and use feedback from the evidence gathered through data analysis of student's results to significantly impact an individual's learning potential.

To support teachers to further develop their capacity as teachers of Religious Education so that students are more fully engaged in the growth and development of their religious literacy.

To continue to be proactive and strategic in consulting and collaborating as a staff to build our collective resourcefulness to offer optimum learning experiences in numeracy (explicitly Mathematics) to lift the learning gains of all students.



7. Parent Participation

7.1 Introduction

The parent community is highly valued at St Bernard's and the list below provides just a snapshot of the numerous ways in which parents are involved.

- Parents work as partners in classroom support during Literacy and Numeracy Blocks and for special educational celebrations.
- Class Parents actively inform the community about upcoming events.
- The Fundraising Committee takes responsibility for organising Mothers and Fathers Day Stalls.
- Social events are coordinated by volunteers.
- The Canteen, Uniform Shop and Kindergarten Playgroup are staffed by parent volunteers
- All families contribute their time and energy to one Working Bee annually. These are capably organised by the Parent Maintenance Team.
- Many parents attend the weekly assembly.
- Further information about parent involvement, along with the Minutes of P&F Meetings, is posted on the website.

7.2 Parent Satisfaction

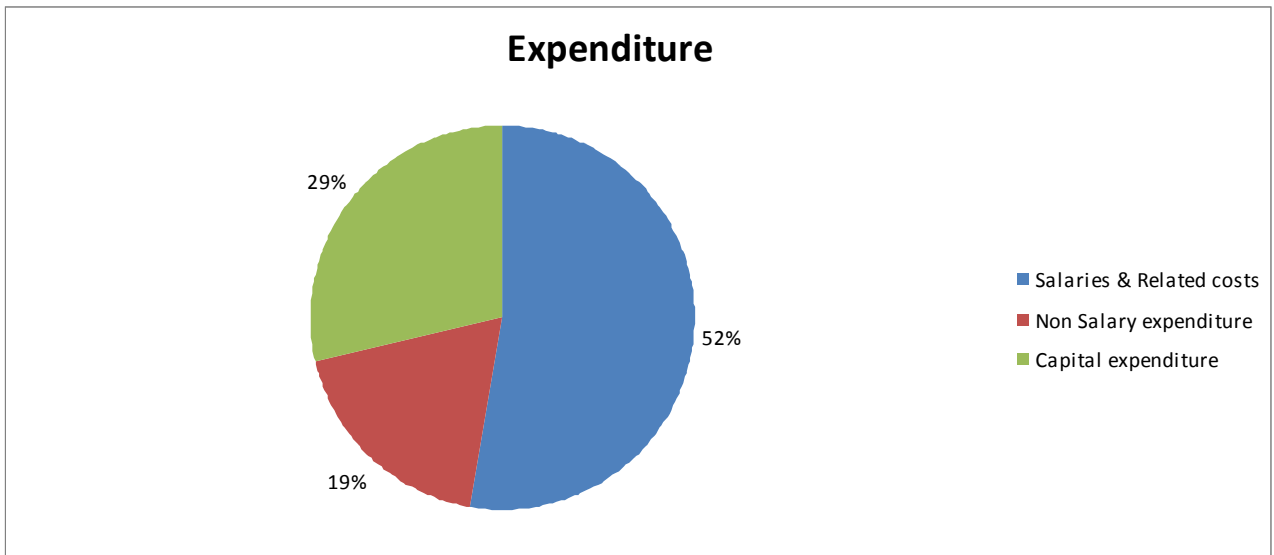
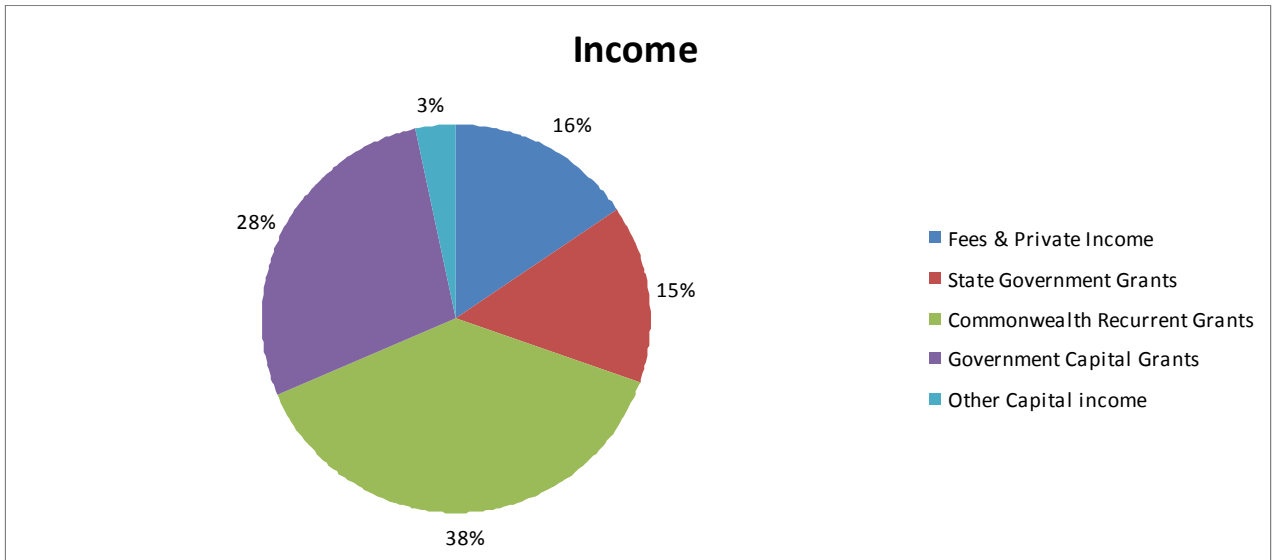
Again, the data gathered from the RADII Satisfaction Survey (75 out of approx. 170 families responded) can be used as evidence to indicate that there is a high rate of satisfaction amongst the parent community.

Parents were overwhelmingly supportive in their affirmation of the faith filled environment in which their child/children are learning. They agree that St Bernard's is an environment that allows their child's faith to grow and that the teachers are good models of adult Christian life. They deemed the school's religious leadership to be active and transparent. Parents saw the Catholic perspective embedded across the total curriculum and acknowledged that the values and mission of the school are clearly articulated. The parent community is to be strongly commended on their efforts to support the school's pastoral care policy and they too commended the staff on their efforts to provide a caring environment for their child/children.



8. Financial Report

Consistent with Board of Studies requirements, financial income and expenditure for this school is shown in the graphs below. More detailed financial data is available on the "myschool" website at <http://www.myschool.edu.au>. Diocesan system financial reporting is found in the Diocese of Broken Bay Catholic Schools Office Annual Report at <http://www.csodbb.catholic.edu.au/resources/annrep.html>



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