

St Gerard's Catholic Primary School Carlingford 2010 Annual Report



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1. Message from Our School Community

1.1 Message from the Principal

This Annual School Report outlines the significant activities undertaken and achievements gained by our school during the 2010 school year. The report acknowledges the central contribution of the strong learning partnership which is shared by the teachers, students and parents.

St Gerard's Catholic Primary School Carlingford is proud of its Catholic tradition and works constantly to promote excellent teaching and learning within a challenging and supportive school environment. This is underpinned by our mindfulness of the school motto, 'Growing in Wisdom and Faith' and is evidenced in our commitment to quality education. I would like to thank all members of the school community; in particular, the dedicated teachers, enthusiastic students and generous parents for their contribution to the schools continued success.

1.2 Message from the Parent Body

Over the last twelve months the Parents at St Gerard's school raised money to fund new teaching resources for the School such as library resources, computers and IT support. In addition, as contemporary teaching evolves so do the learning spaces. This year the Parents and Friends Committee raised funds to develop new external landscape spaces to provide for both physical activity and environmental awareness. The vegetable gardens which not only provide a buffer between the school and the adjacent public spaces but also provide an opportunity for students to participate in the sowing of seeds, composting and plant protection, and finally enjoy the fruits and vegetables from their endeavour. In addition, the Parents and Friends Committee also continued to support the onsite Uniform Shop, which is beginning to develop into a cornerstone of the School community as new uniform styles are selected and initiatives such as the coloured wrist bands and swimming caps are introduced for the four school colour houses. The Uniform Shop also provides an opportunity for the existing parents to meet new parents entering the St Gerard's community. In 2011 the Parents and Friends Committee is committed to completing the external landscape works and developing the IT learning resources within the School, all of which has been undertaken in partnership with the Principal and staff at St Gerard's.

President of the Parents and Friends Committee

1.3 Message from the Student Body

Here we are, almost at the end of our primary school lives. Our time at St Gerard's has gone quickly and we have etched many memories that will stay with us forever.

Year 6 camp and the Canberra excursion would have to be the highlights this year. At St Gerard's we are encouraged to grow in wisdom and faith. This was evident at camp because everyone worked together.

Thank you to all the teachers here at St Gerard's. We have really appreciated all the encouragement and support you have given to us over the past seven years. You have helped us become problem solvers, encouraged us to do our best and you were always there for us whenever we needed a helping hand. We will never forget your dedication! Thank you to our Principal, your guidance and encouragement has been second to none. You have made our jobs as leaders less stressful and our school life one to look back on with pride. Thank you for all you have done.

Thank you to our Parish Priest for helping us on our Christian journey. A big thank you goes out to our loving parents. You have been here throughout our whole school lives.

Lastly, I would like to thank all my classmates for all the fun and exciting times we have experienced. I'm sure we don't want to admit it, but a little piece of us is sad about leaving St



Gerard's and all our great times behind. I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you the best of luck for 2011 as we all venture off into high school. God bless you all.

School Captain



2. School Profile

The school values its role in the life of the Parish of Epping and Carlingford and is proud of its Mercy heritage. St Gerard's Catholic Primary School Carlingford caters for boys and girls from Kindergarten to Year Six. It is located in the Diocese of Broken Bay and is in the suburb of Carlingford. The school shares North Rocks Road with the local State High school and Primary school. St Gerard's is on the border of the Broken Bay Diocese and Parramatta Diocese and is in a very well established suburb. The majority of students are drawn from Carlingford, Beecroft, Epping, North Rocks and the West Pennant Hills areas. The school is tucked away behind the St Gerard's Parish Church and backs onto large council ovals which the students can access. The school enjoys a reputation for excellence in teaching and learning in the wider community and has a welcoming and supportive parent community.

2.1 Student Profile

The following information describes the student profile for 2010:

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Indigenous	Total
164	138	7	0	302

*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
26	0	0	26



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 95%. This figure does not include teachers on planned leave.

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

2.5 Teacher Satisfaction

A formal survey indicated that responses were in the majority, ranging from strongly to agree, indicating staff satisfaction with Catholic Practices, Philosophy and Faith, Pastoral Care and Community and Pedagogy. Informal feedback via evaluation, staff meetings and interviews indicate that staff appreciated their professional learning opportunities particularly in Science, Literacy and Resilience training. Teachers also appreciated the community support with the purchasing of new laptops for the classrooms. Staff would like to see ongoing development with technology resources and more opportunities for training.

2.6 Student Attendance and Retention Rates

Year	Average student attendance rate (%)
K	90
1	90
2	90
3	91
4	89
5	91
6	88

The average student attendance rate for 2010 was 90%.

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

As a result of informal interviews with groups of students, feedback indicates that students have a high degree of satisfaction with the school camps and excursions, participating in school sporting events, playing on the oval and participating in liturgical dance and music for whole school celebrations. A formal survey showed majority satisfaction ranging from strong to slightly agree in areas of My Connection with God and Church, Sharing and Caring and My Learning. Senior students report strong satisfaction with working in the Buddy Program and contributing to their leadership roles and responsibilities in the school. Younger students report enjoyment with learning with technology and using the play equipment and cricket nets.



3. Catholic Life and Mission

3.1 Catholic Heritage

On March 3 1963 Carlingford was decreed a separate parish from Epping and a Parish Priest was appointed. The new parish was named St Gerard Magella and in September 1964 the first school building of three classrooms and offices were opened. The Sisters of Mercy remained at Carlingford until 1980. The first lay Principal was appointed in 1981. The current Vision and Mission Statement is the school's compass for the future where each person can genuinely be guided to live out the espoused values on its Mercy tradition. The school staff are actively engaged in the development of their personal spirituality and faith formation. At the point of employment understanding of Catholic identity and the mission of the school are vital components of the selection process. Our Catholic heritage is perpetuated by the presence of Catholic symbols and religious practices which make up the daily lives of the school community.

3.2 Religious Life of the School

A majority of the teachers and other school staff attended the Diocesan Beginning of School Mass. Our senior students participated in the local cluster Year Six Mass which was officiated by the Bishop.

Each month school parents share responsibility for planning the monthly children's liturgy for the parish Sunday Mass, and our St Gerard's students, both girls and boys, are involved in parish life as junior alter servers. The parish Sacramental Program is supported by parents who act as hosts or group facilitators. Each year the parish Youth Coordinator works with the Religious Education Coordinator and Year Six teachers to plan and facilitate a reflection day for the Year Six students. Because we are a parish with two primary schools we come together each year for a special Mass of celebration and thanksgiving. This year our school student leaders, their families and others families participated with the parish in a pilgrimage of prayer to honour the canonisation of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop. This experience was a great success and highly valued by those who participated. Each month the choir sings for the elderly in the parish at the healing Mass morning tea. Senior students in the hospitality team also assist with serving morning tea.

3.3 Catholic Worldview

Teachers work explicitly to incorporate the values contained in the school mission and vision statement into their daily interactions with the students. Our students, led by the senior students, participated in Mission Week and actively supported Project Compassion and other global issues which arose over the year. The Social Justice Team and school parents worked together as a team, on Cupcake day, to raise money for Project Compassion. Specially trained senior students visit a local home for the elderly on a regular basis. Awareness was raised amongst the whole community, student, parents and staff about the plight of the Indigenous community through the Indigenous Literacy Project. This involved a Book Swap event which also raised funds. The school supported the parish by raising funds for a young person from our parish who was working with an Indigenous group as a Youth Worker in Western Australia. Parents contribute to Project Compassion through the Parents and Friends Committee equalling the funds which the students raise during Lent. We responded to the plight of those affected by the global disaster in Haiti through a special appeal, a Liturgy and prayer.



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.

All school staff participated in a staff spirituality day focussed on; What Does It Mean to Be a Teacher In a Catholic School in Today's World? The religious education coordinator and an invited peer teacher attended a formation day and the administrative assistants gained from their experience of a spirituality day focussing on their particular roles and needs.



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

This year the school supported three teachers in a two day Resilience Skills training course. These teachers in turn provided professional learning for classroom teachers. These skills are used to underpin the implementation of the Pastoral Care policy at the school. Parents' sessions were conducted and well attended. The newsletter contains regular reminders about school rules, behaviour expectations and safe school procedures. The teachers are required to teach anti-bullying lessons explicitly each year and on need. The Principal visits all classrooms each term to emphasise the importance of school rules and ways of behaving in a safe school environment.

4.3 Pastoral Care of Families

Both formal and informal supports exist for our school families. The class parent network supports parents when a family is in need of extra assistance, e.g. when a baby is born, illness or bereavement. The diocesan school counsellor provided professional assistance to several students and families. The school parent liaison representative communicates through the school newsletter when parent talks are being offered. The Principal meets with families who have asked for pastoral assistance and finds ways to offer the most appropriate support.

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.

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

There is an emphasis in building a strong learning team at St Gerard's and this year the stage two teachers participated in a learning initiative; Leaders Transforming Learners and Learning (LTLL). This project is in partnership with the Australian Catholic University and is providing excellent learning for the four teachers in the area of Mathematics. The desired outcome of this two year project is to improve student learning outcomes in Numeracy for the stage two students and to achieve a common approach to quality pedagogical practice amongst the teachers in teaching Mathematics.

The Literacy Project, Writing a Skill for Life, completed its second phase and this focus saw a need for teachers to revisit their processes when teaching writing, in particular making time to model writing for the students. A talented writers group was facilitated and samples of writing published in the newsletter. A draft Literacy plan was completed.

The enrichment student group continued with Science Challenge and Maths Olympiad and Philosophy. The school reviewed and adjusted its transition program and worked in partnership with a local preschool. Transition sessions were made smaller in number and time. The program aimed to connect the preschoolers with the school's places and sounds with emphasis on Library and storytelling.

5.2 Student Achievement

Students in Years Three and Five 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 Three**, 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 Five** 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 8t 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 49 students in Year Three and 51 students in Year Five.

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 Three

		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	2	10	20	12	55	100
Writing	State	2	4	11	27	31	25	97
	National	2	5	13	30	30	17	96
	School	0	2	4	22	27	45	100
Spelling	State	4	9	18	24	25	21	94
	National	7	10	18	24	22	16	91
	School	0	0	16	33	41	10	100
Gr. & Punct.	State	6	9	13	19	25	29	94
	National	6	9	15	21	22	25	92
	School	0	2	4	10	27	57	100
Numeracy	State	3	12	24	22	23	15	95
	National	4	11	23	28	20	12	94
	School	0	0	14	24	31	31	100

Band distribution for Year Three demonstrates that for Reading, Writing, Grammar and Punctuation and Numeracy, the school percentage of students in the top band well exceeds national rates. In four out of the five categories our Band 6 percentage is more than double the national percentage; this is an outstanding result. The school's teaching and learning programs, combined with our extension and remedial support work, are successful in meeting the learning outcomes of our students.

Band Distributions (%) – Year Five

		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	0	12	22	22	16	29	100
Writing	State	4	9	21	38	17	10	95
	National	5	11	27	31	17	7	93
	School	0	6	10	34	20	30	100
Spelling	State	5	11	22	27	24	12	94
	National	6	12	24	28	19	8	92
	School	0	8	22	39	18	14	100
Gr. & Punct.	State	6	11	20	18	28	17	94
	National	6	11	20	26	21	14	92
	School	0	6	25	29	29	10	100
Numeracy	State	4	12	27	25	18	14	95
	National	5	13	26	28	17	9	94
	School	0	4	25	31	25	14	100

Band distribution for Year Five demonstrates that our students have performed very well. We have achieved strong percentages in Band 8 with Reading and Writing indicating exceptional results and with percentages significantly above national level. In the other categories, we are in line with national percentages or above them. Strong scores reflect areas of targeted focus at the classroom level across the school. In moving forward, our focus for the future will be in the areas of Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation. Professional development in 2011 will focus on these curriculum strands and will reflect explicit modelling and teaching to achieve improved student learning outcomes.



5.3 Extra Curricula Activities

Parish Life

A student hospitality team serves morning tea for elderly parishioners at the Healing Mass morning tea once a month. The choir sings at this morning tea.

Students are trained as altar servers for the parish and school Masses.

A number of our students pray through liturgical movement at significant parish celebrations.

Our student school leaders attended the Sydney canonisation celebrations for St Mary of the Cross MacKillop.

University of New South Wales Competitions

Many of our students participated in the University of New South Wales Competitions in 2010. Our results are listed below:

In English, 47 children participated. St Gerard's received 10 Distinctions and 17 Credits.

In Writing, 28 children participated. St Gerard's received 6 Distinctions and 4 Credits.

In Spelling, 43 children participated. St Gerard's received 2 High distinctions, 5 Distinctions and 7 Credits.

In Mathematics, 59 children participated. St Gerard's received 8 Distinctions and 17 Credits.

In Science, 26 children participated. St Gerard's received 2 Distinctions and 9 Credits.

In Computer Skills, 31 children participated. St Gerard's received 3 High Distinctions, 4 Distinctions and 4 Credits.

Music

The St Gerard's Senior and Junior Band involve sixty seven students who have specialist lessons every Tuesday. They perform at school functions as well as special musical evenings for their parents. Members of the Senior Band are also involved with celebrating the coming of Christmas in the community. Our School Choir consists of thirty students who learn and rehearse before school. The choir leads the school at Masses and celebrations and performs at community events.

Engaging with the Community

A group of students who exhibit excellent interpersonal skills, visited Chesalon Aged Care Facility and developed a relationship with selected residents. Skills' training is provided before the program begins each year. Students visit twice a term. The students are regularly commended for their mature interactions with the elderly by the staff at Chesalon. The Social Justice Team leads the students in raising funds for the needy and those affected by natural disasters.

Chess

St Gerard's offers chess coaching by the NSW Academy of Chess. A group of fifteen students enjoy lessons and play in teams each term.

Sporting Opportunities

These include:

- Soccer and netball gala day
- Representative teams in rugby league, cricket, soccer, netball and hockey
- Diocesan representative opportunities for cross country, athletics, swimming and hockey



Leadership Formation

The senior students in Year Six participate in a leadership camp early in Term One. The focus is on leadership, team work, self confidence and facing challenges with the support of a team. This three day experience is highly valued by the students and teachers, as an opportunity to work on individual personal strengths as well as to skill up on ways to contribute to team work.

5.4 Professional Learning

This year the school was allocated five professional learning days. The focus included:

- Strategic direction and Vision for 2010
- Teaching and learning in a Catholic School- external religious facilitator
- Writing a Skill for Life - external facilitator and School Literacy team
- Evaluating professional learning and goals for 2010, setting directions 2011
- Curriculum planning and transition of student data to 2011 teachers

Other key learning experiences for teachers were New Scheme training for Supervisors, NAPLAN data training, Transition Conference (two teachers), NSW Gifted and Talented training day at NSW University, Certificate in Teaching Gifted Maths and Assistant Principal Maths Conference (three days).

Professional learning during staff meetings were planned to reflect the annual plan and towards the end of the year NAPLAN data was analysed and directions set for improvement.



6. Strategic Initiatives

6.1 2010 Priorities and Achievements

The main areas of focus for the 2010 Annual Plan were:

Under the priority of Catholic Life and Mission there was a focus on inviting parents to participate in parent prayer sessions. A small group of parents participated each month. Teacher programs were reviewed each term and feedback was given around alignment to Catholic Schools Office guidelines.

Under Teaching and Learning the focus on writing continued with a draft Literacy Plan being written and taken to the teachers for final review. Students were interviewed before and after an intervention in the approach to teaching writing. It was found that students Kindergarten to Year Six who were interviewed all responded positively to modelling and shared writing techniques being used by the teachers. Data also reflected the need to revisit teaching and learning in Mathematics in Stage Two. Thus for two years four Stage Two teachers will be involved in the LTL project. The project focussed on improved student outcomes and improved teachers' understanding in Numeracy teaching and learning. A statement about Student Leadership in Year Six has been written and provides a guideline for leadership roles and responsibilities.

The Building Education Revolution project has been completed and students are working in their new learning spaces.

6.2 2011 Priorities and Challenges

In 2011 the main areas identified for improvement are:

- Improvement in Numeracy outcomes in Stage Two
- Review current approach to teaching HSIE through using the Inquiry model of teaching and learning
- Revisit the implementation of the student management policy through connecting with aspects of the Positive Behaviours for Learning program



7. Parent Participation

7.1 Introduction

Parents work with the school in partnership, in many ways. These include: assisting with learning groups in the classroom, meeting with teachers to discuss learning and social needs of their child, assisting with excursions, camps, as guest speakers, sporting events, transport and social justice activities.

On a school level: parents assist in canteen, small working bees, managing uniform shop and helping in the Library.

In the parish, our parents assist with the Sacramental programmes either by running or hosting small groups for the program. Also parents work in small teams to prepare a class Liturgy each month for Sunday Mass.

The Parents and Friends Committee raise funds for the school and also play an important role in connecting other parents through whole school social events.

The class parent network forms a vital part of the communication loop in the community. They are seen as parent leaders and assist class families to be included in the life of the school.

7.2 Parent Satisfaction

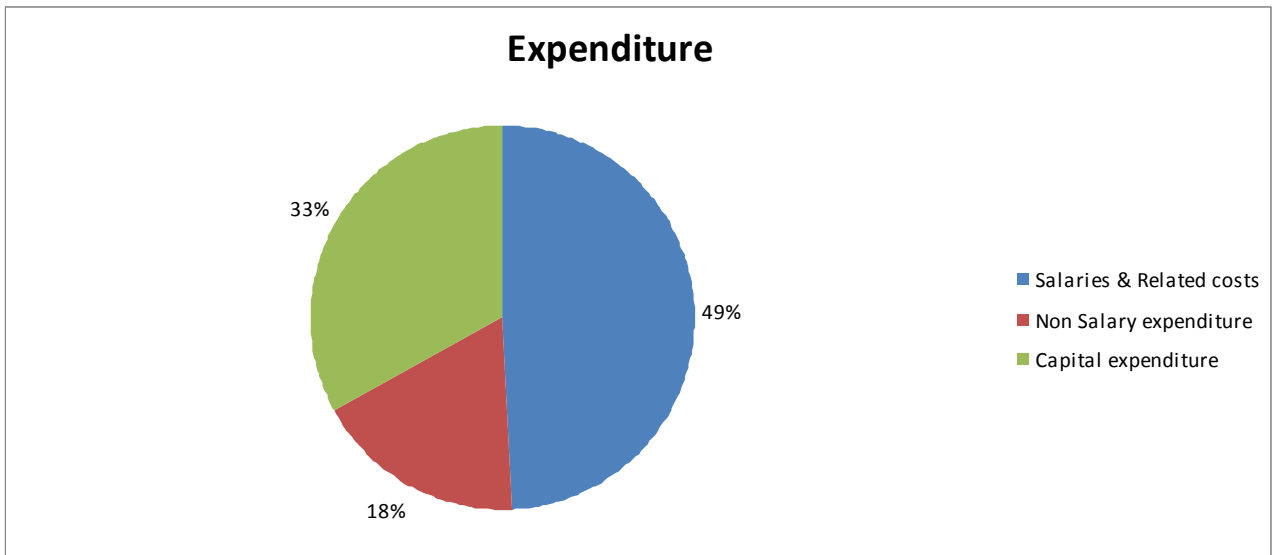
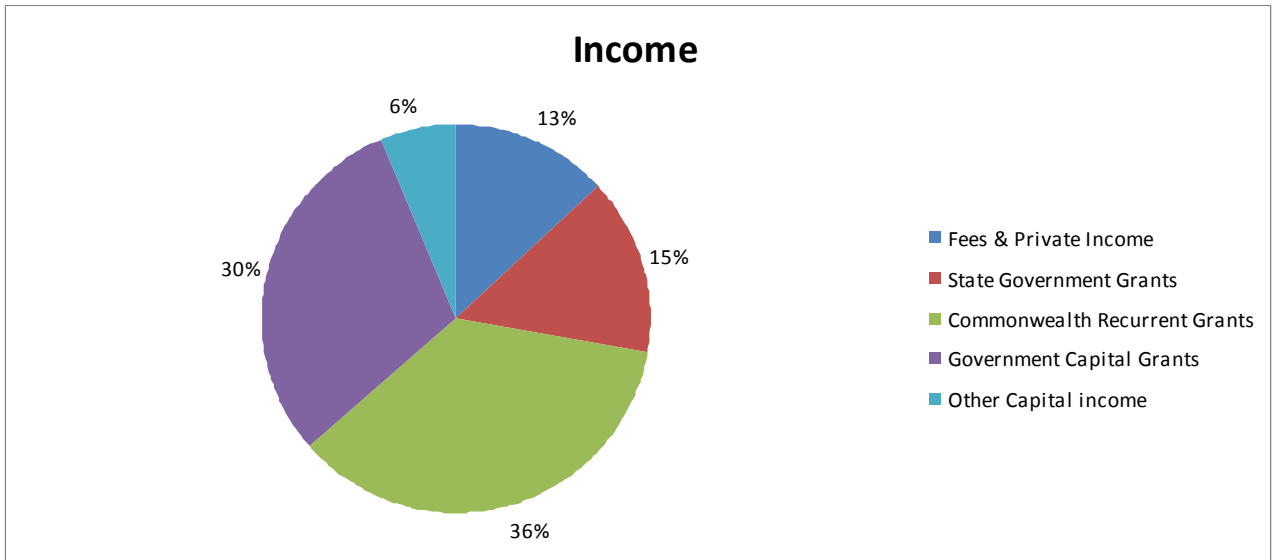
A strong majority of responses to a formal survey conducted in 2010 reported mainly strongly agree and agree responses in the area of Catholic Practices, Philosophy and Faith, in Pastoral Care and Community and in Curriculum Teaching and Learning. They are particularly satisfied with the religious leadership of the school and with the articulated values and mission. They also were strong in their view that the school was a student centred, safe and supportive environment and that the teachers at the school treated the students with respect.

Informally, parents expressed satisfaction with the Monday morning Assembly, the award system and the care and dedication of the staff at St Gerard's school.



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.