

# Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic School Terrigal

## 2008 Annual Report



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

### **1.1 Message from the Principal**

The following report invites readers to take a glimpse into the life of our school. By no means can any report cover the depth and number of activities which make up the day-to-day of schooling. More appropriately this report is a snapshot of school life. At Our Lady Star of the Sea, we are proud of the learning community which is embodied by our school and parish. We hope that in reading this report you will get a feel for the tremendous work and effort demonstrated by staff, students and parents in making our school a great school.

A significant part of our focus in 2008 has been on the development of core values as these are shared and understood by all members of the school community. Of course we are keen to see how these values overlap with community standards and within the context of Catholic Life and Mission. We anticipate these values will underpin all aspects of teaching and learning and be a constant source of reference for our work into the future.

### **1.2 Message from the Parent Body**

Once again the Parents' & Friends' Association (P&F) and the School Board gave parents opportunities to be heavily involved with their children's education. The P&F act as a social group and fundraising committee while our School Board helps to develop the school's mission through working with parent groups in the school. As parents we are really encouraged to become involved in our children's education as partners with the school. Many parents can be seen helping in classrooms or attending the special celebrations offered throughout the year. The dads in our school are especially well catered for with breakfasts and a Dads and Children Camp which was held again in May and was a great success.

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

At our school, we have many opportunities to be leaders in Year 6. This year we have been able to represent our school at Anzac Day and participate in excursions to Canberra as well as lead the school SRC. We have a chance to lead peer support programs and have a market day to raise money for worthwhile causes. All of the school leaders have the opportunity to lead school assemblies. This gives us great confidence to be in front of people. In 2009 we hope to be involved even more with our sister school in Bourke, where we have some pen pals. This year we sent them some new readers which were chosen at a book fair by our students.



## 2. School Profile

### 2.1 Introduction

Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic School is located on the Central Coast of New South Wales at Terrigal. The school is a comprehensive Kindergarten to Year 6 School servicing the needs of families in an area which includes Erina, Terrigal and Avoca up to Forrester's Beach and surrounds. The school enjoys an excellent reputation for the values which it promotes, the pastoral care enjoyed by students and families and the quality of academic and sporting programs being offered. In 2008 the school successfully applied for support to introduce Italian classes. A key feature of the school is the way in which the school community engages with the broader Catholic parish community.

### 2.2 Student Profile

The following information describes the student profile for 2008:

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Indigenous	Total
242	210	0	1	452

\*Language background other than English

### 2.3 Enrolment Policy

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

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

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

### 2.4 Staff Profile

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

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

a	b	c	Total
28	0	0	28



## 2.5 Teacher Attendance and Retention Rates

The average teacher attendance rate during 2008 was 92.1%. This figure does not include teachers on planned leave.

The teacher retention rate from 2007 to 2008 was 76.5%.

## 2.6 Teacher Satisfaction

In completing a workshop focused on school values, the staff at our school identified the following aspects of school life as working well:

- The relationships between school and parish
- The strength of communication between staff
- The quality of relationships within the school
- The sense of belonging and welcome afforded to all.

The staff are very proud of their school and are committed to continual improvement.

## 2.7 Student Attendance

The average student attendance rate for 2008 was 94%.

## 2.8 Student Satisfaction

The things which we really love about our school are the fact that we feel safe, we feel like we belong and we are treated with great respect by our teachers. In 2008 we started Italian classes, which we love. We also love the rotations to different teachers for specialist subjects and music. Our SRC is able to contribute to the running of the school. The other great thing about our school is the friendly teachers. We are looking forward to our oval being finished.



*Colour Houses display their school spirit*



### 3. Catholic Life and Mission

#### 3.1 Catholic Heritage

Our school and parish continued to work harmoniously throughout 2008 to model and grow our Catholic culture. One aspect of culture with which we are very familiar is that the process of evangelisation is constantly being created. With that in mind, our school and parish worked hard in 2008 to develop more effective strategies for meeting the needs of children, parents and teachers.

#### 3.2 Religious Life of the School

Our school masses, reconciliations and liturgies continued to be a vibrant reflection of our collective desire to be a Christian community that reaches out to welcome and help others. Our parish priests led us in faith, wisdom, humour and love. Many children and parents were given real opportunities to interact and express their gifts and talents in our rich celebrations. The teaching staff again displayed an authentic commitment to the Catholic life and mission of our school.

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

A closer link in the school/parish relationship was also developed in 2008 in the ongoing transformation of the sacramental programs for Reconciliation and First Eucharist. Both leadership teams have worked together to plan and implement streamlined programs that are both more effective and considerate of the needs of families. Both school and parish believe our new programs to be highly successful. We have made our evaluations, in part, from the reverence and knowledge displayed by the children and positive feedback from parents.

The school and parish leadership teams reaffirmed a commitment to work together closely to nurture the link between school and parish. This was clearly evident in the seven school/parish masses led by each year group and their parents. Many families attended these 8:30 am Sunday masses and both children and parents participated through readings, prayers, processions, singing in the choir and liturgical movement. All of these masses featured a lovely morning tea where food was provided by the families of the year group attending. These morning teas were very festive and often lasted for thirty to forty minutes.

#### 3.4 Catholic Worldview

Our school masses, reconciliations and liturgies continued to be a vibrant reflection of our collective desire to be disciples of Jesus in a Christian community that reaches out to welcome and help others. Our priests led us in faith, wisdom, humour and love. Many children and parents were given real opportunities to interact and express their gifts and talents in our rich celebrations. The teaching staff again displayed an authentic commitment to the Catholic life and mission of our school.

The school and parish undertook a rigorous process to determine our core values. This procedure included surveying parents, students and teachers, and a joint meeting between the School Board and the Parish Council. By the conclusion of 2008, we had decided that our core values are **Faith, Belonging, Respect, Mission and Learning**. We began this journey of examining and naming our core values to assist us in being an effective and distinctive Catholic community. It is our desire to clearly reflect our beliefs in our words and actions. The school and parish are committed to raising awareness and growing these core values throughout 2009. As part of developing these values our school has installed values banners on the school driveway as you enter the property.





### 3.5 Professional Learning in Catholic Life and Mission

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

During 2008 our staff once again participated in a retreat program which involved an overnight stay. The focus for our learning was on reconciliation. The retreat was led by members of our school staff with local indigenous leaders sharing the foundation stories of their local communities as well as supporting staff in understanding how to walk 'in country' with respect for the sacredness of the land. The staff were invited to see the connections between ourselves as God's creation from an indigenous perspective.



## **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**

In line with diocesan policy, the school continues to provide outstanding models of pastoral care. In 2008 the school launched the Friendly Schools and Families program with support from Catholic Schools Office staff. The program was used to underpin peer support programs led by the students. In addition to this a mentor program for children with social and behavioural difficulties was established.

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

Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic School continues to provide a wide range of supports to families in need. Our school counsellor offers support to families and the Seasons for Growth Program was once again well attended by children, supported by companions from the school parent body. The school P&F operates a CARE committee which helps to support families in 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.

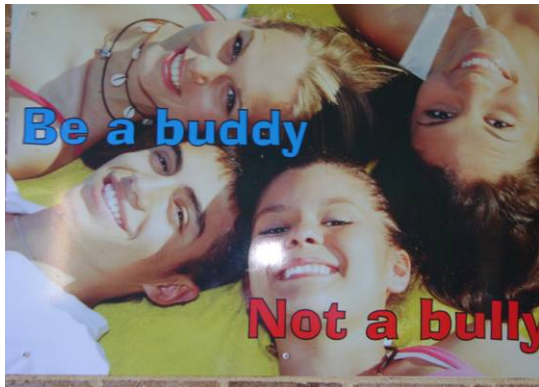
The implementation of this policy is monitored by the Catholic Schools Office.



## 5. Excellence in Teaching and Learning

### 5.1 Quality Teaching and Learning

During 2008 our school strengthened its work in pedagogy through further implementation of the Quality Teaching Framework. Using focus questions to deepen the students' experiences of the integrated units, our school has started to align core values within the curriculum framework. With a particular focus on quality mathematics tasks, students are challenged to complete work at the appropriate standard. A standard approach to numeracy time has enabled more concentration on developing student skills in thinking mathematically.



As part of the Leaders Transforming Learning and Learners project (LTLL), our school has embarked upon a challenging process of aligning core values with major curriculum, teaching and learning initiatives. This work involves the whole school community in exploring the type of students we hope will leave our school and the way that we are equipping them socially, academically and spiritually to become those students. The core values are currently being developed with the staff, parents and students. These will be further developed in 2009 and

become the lynch pin on which our deliberations about teaching and learning as well as developing community will be based. This approach is supported by research which encourages the holistic development of the child to become world ready.

In response to feedback from parents it was agreed that in 2009 parent/teacher interviews will be held in Term 1 to enable deeper communication between parents and teachers at the beginning of the school year. This is in addition to existing practices already in place through information nights.

The staff recognise the need for further refinement and development of appropriate rubrics to determine A-E results for student learning.

Closer links are being developed with the Catholic secondary schools in our geographical area to ensure that students and families imagine these schools as a natural progression from our primary school.

### 5.2 Student Achievement

2008 was the first year of the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). As a result of this new initiative, several points should be noted:

- A national minimum standard replaces the national benchmark of previous years.
- It is not possible in 2008 to provide comparisons with previous years' data.
- Students who were exempted from a test were deemed not to have met the national minimum standard.
- In the 2008 cohort, there were 62 students in Year 3 and 61 students in Year 5.

Detail on school performance is provided in the following tables where band distributions and percentages of students achieving the national minimum standard are outlined separately for Year 3 and Year 5. In Year 3, the highest band that a student can achieve is Band 6. In Year 5, the highest band that a student can achieve is Band 8.




**Year 3 band distributions and % of students at or above national minimum:**

		Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6 (+)	% at or above national minimum
<b>Reading</b>	School	6	3	10	15	35	31	93.5
	National	6.1	12	17.7	23	21.7	17.7	92.1
<b>Writing</b>	School	5	3	10	23	13	46	95.1
	National	2.9	6.5	15.6	28.7	27.4	17.2	95.4
<b>Spelling</b>	School	2	8	15	29	19	27	98.3
	National	5.9	10	19	25.9	21.9	15.5	92.4
<b>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</b>	School	2	8	13	21	21	35	98.3
	National	6.6	10.7	17.3	23.3	21.3	19.1	91.7
<b>Numeracy</b>	School	2	5	18	32	24	19	98.3
	National	3.3	10.9	22.9	28	20.9	12.4	95.0

Band distributions at Year 3 level demonstrate that for every test area, the school percentage of students in the top three bands exceeds the national rates. It is pleasing to note that the percentages of students in the bottom two bands in every test area were less than the national average. It is evident from our results in reading, writing and grammar and punctuation that we have achieved excellent results in the top band for these tests in comparison to the national average. The writing results in particular, demonstrate outstanding success with 46% in Band 6. Given that this cohort is made up of two large classes of children which have had high numbers since Kindergarten, these results testify to the high quality of teaching and support which they have received. Some children in this group have required additional support due to specific learning difficulties.

**Year 5 band distributions and % of students at or above national minimum:**

		Band 3 (-)	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6	Band 7	Band 8 (+)	% at or above national minimum
<b>Reading</b>	School	0	3	25	33	18	21	100
	National	7.5	13.6	23.9	26	18.1	9.3	90.9
<b>Writing</b>	School	0	3	7	33	30	28	100
	National	5.9	11.8	25.3	29.3	17.9	8.3	92.5
<b>Spelling</b>	School	2	3	16	28	26	25	98.3
	National	6.8	12.8	24.9	28.2	18.2	7.6	91.7
<b>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</b>	School	0	5	15	31	28	21	100
	National	6.6	11	21.2	26.4	19.9	13.4	91.9
<b>Numeracy</b>	School	2	7	23	43	20	7	98.3
	National	5.9	17.4	28.9	25.7	13.9	6.6	92.6

The results from these tests in literacy indicate that our Year 5 cohort performed at an exceptional level with 100% of the students achieving the national minimum in reading, writing and grammar and punctuation. In addition 98.3% were also achieving the national minimum in spelling. The results in the top three bands for writing are well above the national minimum with 90% achieving in Bands 6, 7 and 8. These results indicate that these children are being well extended and have high levels of skill in these areas. The challenge in numeracy will be to extend this cohort of children to further develop their knowledge and skills by providing explicit teaching in targeted areas that need to be strengthened. The school has taken a particular focus in numeracy teaching and learning over the past twelve months and it is expected that this will begin to have further impact in the coming years.



### 5.3 Extracurricular Activities



*St Patrick's Day fun for Project Compassion*

As well as providing excellent support across all KLAs our school is widely engaged in activities to broaden students' experiences in a wide variety of activities. Our school participates in public speaking and debating. During lunchtimes children have an opportunity to be a part of Mini Vinnies, play chess, participate in dance troupe and become part of the SRC. Our Lady Star of the Sea engages with other schools in the diocese and with other systems to support students' participation in a wide variety of sporting activities including swimming, cross country and athletics as well as soccer, AFL, basketball and netball.

### 5.4 Professional Learning

The average expenditure on professional learning, per teacher, in 2008 was \$1,200.

The focus of professional learning in 2008 was through Primary Connections and the Science in Primary Schools Project as well as the Friendly Schools and Families anti-bullying program. At a school level support was provided to teachers through mentoring in mathematics. This was carried out by releasing the mathematics coordinator to work with each stage group designing high quality task for their mathematics classes.



## 6. Strategic Initiatives

### 6.1 2008 Priorities and Achievements

From the 2007 annual plan, priority areas which were supported and achieved were as follows:

- St Vincent De Paul Winter and Christmas appeal
- Our sister school, St Ignatius, in Bourke
- Development of our outreach program through activities such as school choir and Mini Vinnies
- Re-established class parish-school masses
- Engaged parish priest in school life
- Educated our children in core values (Catholic Worldview)
- Further development of our Dads in School Program, including a weekend camp
- Development of specialist teaching skills through curriculum rotation of classes
- Introduction of Languages Other Than English (LOTE) with Co As It classes in Italian across the whole school
- Further implementation of the Diocesan Pedagogy Initiative through embedding of Quality Teaching Practices
- Continued to develop links with Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Finance Committee examining shared responsibilities
- Continued commitment to implementation of processes and practices for maintaining a Safe School through OH&S.

### 6.2 2009 Priorities and Challenges

- Integration of community-identified core values into the fabric of school life
- Active participation in the Leaders Transforming Learning and Learners project
- Participation in school board development through the Diocesan Colloquium
- Consolidation of the Friendly Schools and Families Program through programs and policy development
- Engagement with sister school at Bourke as part of mission to provide school leaders with an opportunity to work with students from St Ignatius
- Ongoing commitment to development of school students' leadership through enhanced roles for the SRC
- Continued provision of faith development of staff through staff retreat at Somersby
- Embedding of the parish-school mass program into the life of our school by further refinement of the school-parish masses, engagement in parish Lenten events and leadership during Holy Week
- Refinement of professional learning practice in mathematics to maximise student potential in numeracy learning



## **7. Parent Participation**

### **7.1 Introduction**

2008 marked the end of the second full year of the School Board. During the Board retreat it was noted that the group had already been able to have a significant impact within the school community. It was agreed that a Board Newsletter would be published outlining achievements and inviting interested parents to become involved. This recruitment process resulted in three new board members joining the board during 2008.

The P&F continued to provide a place for significant parental involvement in school life. From fundraising to social events and an outstanding School Fair, the P&F continued to work in partnership with the school leadership team and School Board to support educational and recreational initiatives of the school.

### **7.2 Parent Satisfaction**

In 2008 our School Board conducted an extensive values survey with families. 91% of families indicated a strong sense of feeling part of the community while 99% indicated that they felt welcomed by the school staff. 96% of parents indicated that they valued a strong school-parish link. Parents commented on the high degree of professionalism amongst staff and that Catholic education was the most important reason for choosing the school. Parents were also desirous of the school continuing with its outreach program and developing stronger initiatives for environmental education. There were high levels of satisfaction with the level of communication between the school and the parent population.

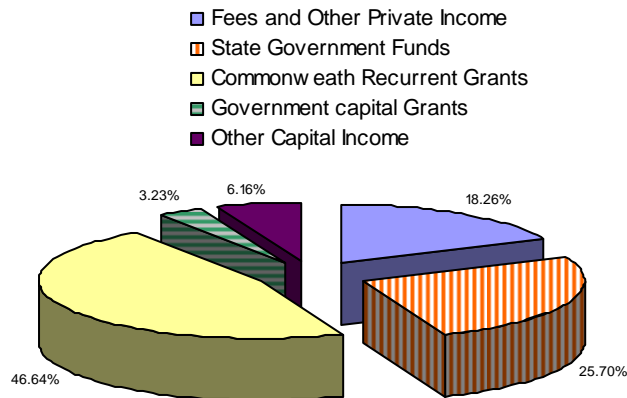


## 8. Financial Report

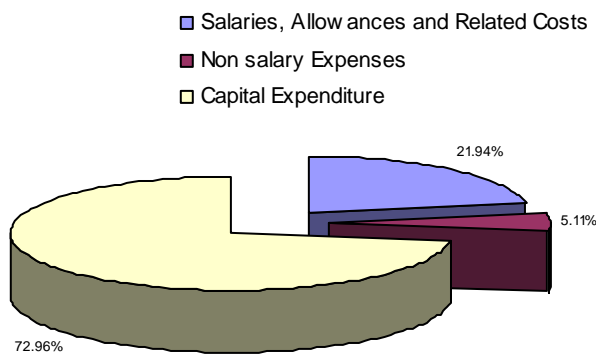
Consistent with Board of Studies requirements, financial income and expenditure for this school is shown in the graphs below.

Diocesan system financial reporting is found in the Diocese of Broken Bay Catholic Schools Office Annual Report.

### Income



### Expenditure



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