



Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn
CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE

ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Batlow, NSW

2014 Annual Report



SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION

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Mrs Chris Baron

PRINCIPAL

MESSAGE FROM OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Principal's Message

St Mary's Primary School prides itself on being a warm, welcoming and inclusive school. Being a small school enables staff, students and parents to be very connected within the school context, as well as the local community. 2014 has been an exciting year with the introduction of iPads for all students from Kindergarten to Year 6. This has enhanced teaching and learning across the school as well as student engagement, and provided students at St Mary's Primary School with another learning tool to support literacy and numeracy development. Literacy has been a major focus for 2014, with special emphasis on enhancing writing skills across Kindergarten to Year 6. Support through the Collaboration on Student Achievement (COSA) project has enabled staff and students to track student progress, and celebrate students published works with the school community.

School Council Message

2014 has continued to be a busy year for the Community Council, resulting in the undertaking of several projects in the school, and exciting concepts including the implementation of an iPad program for all students. The Community Council has been focused on the availability of appropriate resources, providing the students of St Mary's Primary School the opportunity to develop their learning experiences. Further initiatives regarding this are set to continue in 2015. The Community Council would like to recognise the significant efforts of parents and friends in volunteering their time for various activities throughout the year.

Brenton Hotham,
Chair

Student Representative's Message

We were excited to accept the role of Year 6 leadership at St Mary's Primary School this year. We were given the opportunity to be either: Media Moguls, Hospitality Hosts or Sport Specialists. At the Opening School Mass, Year 6 students were presented with their leadership badges. Our first task was to help our Kindergarten students settle into our school. Throughout the year we have raised money for Caritas, the Missions, the Cancer Council and our local animal rescue team. We were also delighted to be invited for afternoon tea with The Governor Marie Bashir during Term 2.

Holly, Georgia, Ryley, Jasmine, Jessy-Raye and Darcy.
Year 6 Leaders

SCHOOL FEATURES

St Mary's Primary School is a Catholic Primary School located in Batlow. The school caters for students from Kindergarten - Year 6, and has a current enrolment of 42 students.

Students attending this school come from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities consisting of 21 male and 21 female students; 4 Indigenous students; and no students with a Language Background other than English (LBOTE).

The school employs 6 staff comprising 4 teachers and 2 non-teaching staff, the latter being employed in a variety of capacities including Learning Support Assistant and Office Administration. None of the staff identify as Indigenous.

St Mary's Primary School has a strong sense of history, being established in 1923 by the Sisters of St Joseph. The Josephite tradition still remains a focus within the school today, despite the departure of the sisters many years ago. Continued involvement in community initiatives including: Batlow Daycare, Apple Blossom Festival and Anzac Day are of utmost importance to the school community. The St Mary's Community Council has played a pivotal role in supporting the school with fundraising efforts to enable a one to one iPad program from Kindergarten through to Year 6. These efforts have also assisted in funding the purchase of other resources including apps, classroom readers and continued improvements to the playground and school maintenance. The students have also been involved in many sporting opportunities such as Footsteps Dance, Riverina Netball Gala Day as well as representation at Western Region and Archdiocesan events. Students also represented St Mary's Primary School in the Small Schools Swimming and Relay events.

Funding from the Outer Regional School Support (ORSS) program enabled the Upper Primary students to experience a three day excursion to Sydney, while the Infants visited the Japanese Embassy, a Japanese restaurant and Questacon in Canberra to further enhance Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE) units. The Active After School Community Program has also continued this year with many students taking the opportunity to actively participate in this government funded program.

The school's website can be found at www.stmarysbatlow@.nsw.edu.au

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

St Mary's Primary School Batlow follows the Archdiocesan Religious Education Curriculum, *Treasures New and Old*. St Mary's Primary School is proud to proclaim its Catholic identity to the community, and the school's Catholic culture has continued to grow.

At St Mary's Primary School we aim to integrate the school's Religious Education program into the whole curriculum to ensure that the children come to follow Jesus in the Catholic tradition, developing values and attitudes that could be described as essentially Catholic. Meaningful lessons in Religious Education are part of the school day, and Gospel values and attitudes permeate all aspects of school life.

This year has seen a change in our Parish life as we no longer have a priest. Instead, we have seen the introduction of Liturgies. There have been a number of occasions at which we have been able to share and celebrate with the school and parish community, including the Opening School Mass, Ash Wednesday Mass, Stations of the Cross, Saint Mary of the Cross Liturgy, St Mary's Feast Day Liturgy and the Year 6 Thanksgiving Mass at the end of the year. Participation in whole school Liturgies and Assemblies have added to the Catholic life of the school.

Once a week, the whole school gathers to pray together and reflect. We have used this time for the focus on and integration of Making Jesus Real program (MJR). Students in Years 3 to 6 also have their own MJR workbooks which they regularly complete in conjunction with Whole School Prayer lessons on MJR. From MJR we have introduced elements into our Pastoral Care Policy including 'God Moments'. School support of the Parish Sacramental Program continues, although no students celebrated sacraments this year.

This year, St Mary's Primary School students raised funds for Caritas, Catholic Missions and St Vincent de Paul, as well as donating to the needy families within our own community. All students visited the local nursing home throughout the year, where they sang songs and shared their work with the residents. We joined St Joseph's Adelong to share in their Feast Day celebrations and in turn they joined us for our Feast Day celebrations.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT - NAPLAN

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

School and National Mean Scale Scores

YEAR 3	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar & Punctuation	Numeracy
National	419	402	412	426	402
School	364	363	341	353	358

YEAR 5	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar & Punctuation	Numeracy
National	501	468	498	504	487
School	461	475	456	465	465

Proportion of students at or above the National Minimum Standard

YEAR 3	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar & Punctuation	Numeracy
National	94%	94%	93%	94%	95%
School	50%	50%	50%	75%	75%

YEAR 5	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar & Punctuation	Numeracy
National	93%	90%	93%	93%	93%
School	80%	100%	80%	80%	60%

Proportion of students in each Achievement Band

YEAR 3	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar & Punctuation	Numeracy
Band 6	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Band 5	0%	25%	25%	25%	0%
Band 4	25%	25%	0%	25%	25%
Band 3	0%	0%	25%	25%	50%
Band 2	50%	50%	25%	25%	25%
Band 1	0%	0%	25%	0%	0%

YEAR 5	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar & Punctuation	Numeracy
Band 8	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Band 7	20%	0%	0%	0%	20%
Band 6	0%	40%	40%	40%	40%
Band 5	60%	60%	40%	40%	0%
Band 4	20%	0%	0%	20%	20%
Band 3	0%	0%	20%	0%	20%

The above tables show that the students in Year 3 and 5 performed well overall. Results were evenly distributed through the middle bands, with little representation in the lower bands. Students in Year 5 have shown continued growth across all areas. Most pleasing to note this year was the great results in writing as well as grammar and punctuation for Year 3 students, and the numeracy results for Year 5 students. This is due to a number of initiatives employed over the last few years, including the Numeracy Intervention Program and First Steps reading and writing strategies which are taking effect and resulting in improved outcomes. NAPLAN results will be further analysed to inform and guide the direction for future improvements with continued focus in the areas of reading, writing, spelling and problem solving.

SCHOOL POLICIES

Enrolment Policy

In enrolling students we are directed by the Archdiocesan Enrolment Policy which can be found on the Annual Report page of the school's website or on the Catholic Education Archdiocese of Canberra Goulburn (CE) website at

<http://www.ceocg.catholic.edu.au/parents/Pages/GeneralPolicies.aspx>

To be accepted for enrolment in Kindergarten at St Mary's Primary School a child must turn five years of age by 30 April in the year of enrolment. An Open Day is held during Term 2 each year, where all eligible children and their families are invited to the school for an information and classroom familiarisation visit.

Consecutive orientation days are offered during Term 4, for all new Kindergarten students due to begin the following year. This provides an opportunity for students to familiarise themselves with the school environment. For new families wishing to enrol in other classes, an appointment may be made with the Principal and/or class teacher/s to find out any relevant information, obtain a school information package and/or organise a tour of the school.

Attendance Policy

St Mary's Primary School Attendance Policy is aligned to the CE "Attendance at Schools (NSW)" Policy (Jan 2013). St Mary's Primary School staff follow the following procedure to monitor student attendance:

1. Class teachers record daily absences in a class roll according to guidelines at the commencement of each school day.
2. Parents are encouraged to provide a written explanation of a student's absence.
3. If a written explanation is not forthcoming within two weeks of the student's return to school, the class teacher issues a formal reminder.
4. The Principal reviews all class rolls at the end of each term.
5. The Principal will contact parents or guardians if records indicate a non-compliance with Compulsory School Attendance Legislation.
6. The Principal and school staff will endeavour to assist families who may be experiencing difficulty with complying to regulations.

Absences

Any absence is to be explained in writing, upon the child's return. No child is allowed to leave the school grounds without written or in-person notification by a parent/guardian (parent). Parents are required to sign a register located in the front office before collecting the student during school hours. When parents plan to exclude their children from school for reasons other than sickness or unforeseen events (e.g. funerals), parents are required to complete an Application for Student Exemption Form, available from the school office. A certificate of exemption will then be issued. All non-attendance will be followed up with a phone call to the parent in the initial instance and then with a formal school letter if regular absences are noted.

St Mary's Primary School Pastoral Care Policy

The aim of the St Mary's Primary School Pastoral Care Policy is to ensure a consistent, caring and positive approach to behaviour management, ensuring everyone is treated with dignity and respect and valuing each person as an individual. With Jesus Christ as our model, we aim to develop a truly Christian community that endeavours to give witness to Gospel Values as expressed in our school motto 'Peace, Love & Joy'. As a staff, we are committed to modelling responsible behaviour to the students in our care and dealing with them at all times in a fair and consistent manner. The school implements support structures and programs which prioritise and address the identified needs of individual students, as well as the school as a whole.

The school's policy has incorporated the values of the 'Making Jesus Real' Program which encourages exemplary behaviour modelled on the person of Jesus Christ. Students displaying appropriate behaviour in both the school and playground are rewarded, and students who have their name recorded regularly are presented with a Principal's Award. The aim of the policy is to ensure a consistent, caring and positive approach to behaviour. Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited in this school. In addition we do not sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons to enforce discipline at our school.

The full text of St Mary's Primary School Pastoral Care Policy is available from the Front Office.

Complaints and Grievances Resolution Policy

The school policy is based on procedural fairness and recognises that parents and caregivers must have access to processes that allow them to resolve concerns in a supportive and conciliatory environment. Any concerns raised are responded to promptly and fairly and confidentiality is always maintained. A full text of the school policy is available on the school website or from the Front Office.

PRIORITIES AND TARGETS

In 2015, St Mary's Primary School will set Literacy as a major focus area. A targeted approach to improving outcomes in reading, writing and spelling will be supported by the Collaborating on Student Achievement (COSA) project and continued implementation of the First Steps Reading, Writing and Spelling strategies. Identified students will also be included in a Literacy Intervention Program aimed at improving literacy skills from the Infant years through to students who require additional support in the primary school years. A whole school approach to spelling will be continued with First Steps being further incorporated into literacy programs, with more explicit emphasis on spelling rules and strategies.

The Numeracy Intervention Program will be continued in 2015 which will allow us to support students experiencing difficulty in Numeracy. 'Working like a Mathematician' strategies will also be continued across the primary classes. Inquiry learning will continue to be developed in the areas of HSIE, Science and Technology which will allow staff to develop more creative and challenging programs that engage students. Continued focus on numeracy and literacy

strategies will give our students a valuable tool to engage in learning while opening new and exciting opportunities to learn.

A continued emphasis will be on integrating technology into classroom learning activities, with an iPad being distributed to each child. Students in Years 5/6 will become the 'experts' for specific apps, and will be able to assist other students in learning about that particular app.

The Outer Regional School Support funding will be utilised to provide the students with the best possible opportunities to integrate Information Technology and creative skills into classroom programs. This funding will continue to assist with costs towards excursions and other cultural and sporting experiences, to ensure that students will experience opportunities that would otherwise be unavailable in remote country areas.

2015 will bring exciting new initiatives as well as challenges, and together with the high quality teaching expertise of staff members will provide wonderful learning opportunities for students at St Mary's Primary School Batlow!

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Professional Learning

All teachers have been involved in professional learning during the year. These activities are designed to develop the skills and understandings of staff to improve student outcomes. Professional learning can take many forms including whole staff days, subject specific inservices, meetings and conferences.

The school held four whole staff days in 2014. The content of these days was:

- Term 1 - Making Jesus Real-Spirituality Day, Positive Partnerships
- Term 2 - Kaye Lowe-Reading and Writing
- Term 3 - The English Syllabus

The staff also completed two more twilight sessions on Positive Partnerships as well as a First Aid Course.

Teacher Qualifications

All teachers are qualified as required by the relevant State and Territory bodies.

TEACHER ATTENDANCE AND RETENTION

The average teacher attendance rate during 2014 was 86%.

The teacher retention rate from 2013 to 2014 was 80%.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

The average student attendance for the school during 2014 was 93%.

School attendance rates disaggregated by Year group are shown in the following table.

Attendance rates by Year group

Kindergarten	91%
Year 1	93%
Year 2	89%
Year 3	92%
Year 4	91%
Year 5	93%
Year 6	99%

PARENT, TEACHER AND STUDENT SATISFACTION

St Mary's Primary School Batlow annually surveys parents, teachers and students to assess satisfaction levels. The results of these surveys are detailed below.

Parent Satisfaction:

The level of parent satisfaction is high at St Mary's Primary School. Parents value the education their children are receiving and as a whole are interested and supportive. Comments received have reflected that the school is committed in its approach to 'inclusive' education, and that staff deal appropriately with behaviour, especially in developing skills to make life long changes. Parents believe that the teachers are very enthusiastic in their approach to their work, that they are committed educators providing a stimulating and safe environment, and that the school sets high standards for the children while developing a home and school partnership. Parents also appreciated the time staff spent in giving constructive ideas to assist parents at home to develop essential skills with their child. The support parents give to the fundraising activities with the St Mary's Community Council is also very high. Parents feel they have opportunities to be involved in the school's activities, and overall, are very satisfied with the education of their children.

Teacher Satisfaction:

Teachers at St Mary's Primary School feel valued and respected by colleagues, parents and students. Teachers feel they have a safe and proactive work environment where the opportunity for professional development is readily available. Teachers feel they set a good example to their students within a climate that is conducive to learning. They are committed to the school and their role is considered important. They believe their workplace has a positive ethos, where leadership is valued and effective, they have input into some aspects of school decisions and overall the school is managed well.

Student Satisfaction:

The majority of students at St Mary's Primary School are satisfied with their education. Most feel welcomed and valued by their class teacher, and feel that their teacher is providing a varied and engaging curriculum within a safe and secure classroom environment. Students believe the one to one iPad program has been very effective in helping them learn, and believe it adds a more interesting aspect to their education. Students believe their teachers are well organised and enthusiastic in their approach to teaching. They believe their teachers are caring and understanding. St Mary's Primary School students feel confident

and encouraged to participate in all school activities. Student comments indicated that the majority of students are happy at school and are proud to be members of St Mary's Primary School.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

