Annual School Report
2011 School Year

Mt St John’s Primary School

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About this report

Mt St John’s Catholic Primary School is registered by the Board of Studies (NSW) and managed by the Lismore Catholic Education Office (CEO), as the ‘approved authority’ for the Registration System formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act 1990.

The Annual Report to the Parish School Community for this year provides the parish school community with fair, reliable and objective information about school performance measures and policies, as determined by the Minister for Education.

The Report also outlines to the parish school community information about initiatives and developments of major interest and importance to the parish school community during the year and the achievements arising from the implementation of the school’s Strategic Management Plan and Annual Plan.

The Report demonstrates accountability to the Federal and State Government regulatory bodies, the parish and school community and the Catholic Education Office. This Report has been approved by the CEO which monitors school processes to ensure compliance with all NSW Board of Studies requirements for Registration.

This Report complements and is supplementary to school newsletters, yearbooks and other regular communications. The Report will be available on the school’s website by 30 June 2012 following its submission to the Board of Studies.

The contents of this Report are able to be discussed at various parent forums and all information is public.

Further information about the school or this Report may be obtained by contacting the school on 02 6657 2552 or by visiting the website: msjdor@lism.catholic.edu.au
Principal’s Message

The primary purpose of Mt St John’s Catholic Primary School is to support the members of the parish community in providing a faith formation for their children. The school fosters a commitment to the individual person and provides opportunities for academic, cultural and sporting achievement. Mt St John’s offers students a Catholic education based on the teaching of the Church and within the context of a strong faith community.

Our parish school continued to provide many opportunities for the faith and spiritual growth of the students as well as opportunities to excel in academic, cultural and sporting areas. All of these areas combined to ensure that our school’s mission was lived out daily in the life of the school.

The building and refurbishment program that was commenced last year as part of the Federal Government’s, “Building the Education Revolution”, concluded mid-year. Students moved into new classrooms to commence Term 3. An official opening was held on the 26th October and was a major celebration for our school community.

The students’ achievements and accomplishments were showcased throughout 2011. Student work was proudly displayed in classrooms, on school noticeboards, in the school office and on class web pages. School achievement was highlighted and celebrated at many school assemblies. Our focus was to continue to build on the reputation that Mt St John’s has earned as an exemplary school. The following list provides an indication of the school’s academic achievements:

- The speeches written and delivered by Year 5 students seeking election as School Captains were of an exceptionally high standard. The content was well-thought out and considered, while the speeches were delivered with poise, confidence and maturity.
- Students in both Stages 2 and 3 participated in Regional enrichment workshops with well-known children’s author Deborah Abela.
- Science Week was celebrated with hands-on workshops led by the senior students. They were responsible for facilitating activities and guiding younger students.
- Stage 3 students became more engaged with technology as they learned to navigate a class Moodle page which cyber-linked their homes and their classroom.
- One of our School Captains was awarded first place in the N.S.W. RSL “Australia Remembers” poetry competition, which saw her travel to Sydney to be presented with her award by the Governor.
- 2011 saw the establishment of our “Mini Mounties” program for pre-school age children.

There were many opportunities throughout the year for our school to be represented at community and cultural events. The following list provides an indication of the school’s cultural program and community involvement:

- Dance Fever inter-school challenge
- ANZAC Day March and Remembrance Service
- visits to and from Dorrigo Pre-School
- Schools Clean-Up Day
- Dorrigo Centenary Show exhibition and mural activity;
- senior citizens’ Christmas party performance.

Students performed well at various sporting events during the year. The following list provides some examples of sporting highlights:

- Swimming trials replaced our combined carnival with St Mary’s this year, and proved to be a successful way of choosing a team to participate at the Clarence Zone Carnival.
- The St Mary’s Bellingen Parish Schools’ Athletics Carnival was another successful event which involved all students from both schools.
- Royal Life Saving conducted a water awareness and safety program in December. Students were all individually assessed and wrist-banded. Senior students were taught the basics of C.P.R.
- Our school had representatives at Zone, Diocesan and State levels in the following sports: swimming, shot-put, long jump, and 800 metres running events.

There were many people who assisted in the school’s quest for excellence. In particular, special thanks are extended to the parent body and the school staff for all their generous efforts. Mt St John’s is indeed blessed to have such dedicated and enthusiastic people forming our community.

Greg Ryan
Principal

A Parent Message

Being a small school could be seen as a disadvantage by some, but the Parents and Friends (P&F) at Mt St John’s School are united in celebrating our school’s definite advantages. It is always a pleasure to walk through the doors to greet friendly staff who are always willing to discuss concerns, and who are able to provide our children with a high level of one-on-one teaching time.

With BER works complete, the resources and facilities now available for students are amazing for a small school. Parents and Friends were involved in the opening of the new school buildings, which was a big step forwards in the school’s long history.

In 2011, Mt St John’s P&F raised $3,166.65 to put towards the purchase of classroom and library furniture following the completion of BER building works. P&F funds were also used for removalists to transfer equipment between the old buildings, storage and the new buildings. Fundraising during 2012 will also focus on classroom and library needs in the new buildings.

Fundraising efforts in 2011 were well supported by the local community and we are continually delighted by the response and positive feedback provided about the school. Street stalls, art calendars, a bulb fundraiser, the Christmas raffle, the Dorrigo Show BBQ, and especially the very popular Cake Trolley have all contributed to a steady flow of fundraising income throughout the year. A big thank must go to all parents and carers for their generosity when volunteering, supporting, baking and ‘bbqing’ at our fundraising events.
The school canteen volunteers also deserve many thanks for all their hard work during the year, especially Sally Duckett and Allison Davies, our canteen coordinators.

The P&F Association is again thankful to the Parent Assembly for providing continuing funds to hold information seminars on parenting issues. In 2011 we were able to run an informative seminar on childhood depression and anxiety, presented by child psychologist Chris Collyer. Our two parent representatives, Cath Hartin and Di McGuigan, have kept us informed of the excellent opportunities provided by the Parent Assembly each year.

I would like to welcome new members to the P&F, and look forward to another year of activities and fundraising for the benefit of all students at Mt St John’s School.

Venita Colquhoun
President
Mt St John’s Primary School Parents & Friends Association

**This Catholic School**

Dorrigo is a small rural community situated on the edge of the New England Plateau, on the mid north coast of New South Wales. Students come from the town itself, and from surrounding areas including Ebor, 30 minutes driving time from Dorrigo. Essentially a farming community, other employment opportunities include State Forests, National Parks and Wildlife Service, tourism and town support infrastructure.

We are a Kindergarten to Year 6 Catholic Primary School of the Mary Immaculate Mother of God Parish, Bellingen, and a systemic school of the Lismore Diocese.

Opened by the Presentation Sisters in 1924, the school has a rich tradition of providing a Catholic education for the local community. The school retains its status as a small school. It commenced with 55 students in 1924 and had an enrolment of 44 students at the 2011 Commonwealth Census.

In 2011, the school was divided into three multi-age class groups covering the seven primary school grades.

Our goal is to live out our School Vision and live the Mission Statement.

Our Vision: *To be a community of learners and believers where the whole person is nurtured in mind, body and spirit guided by the hand of God.*

Our Mission: *To create a community of learners by fostering the uniqueness and potential of each individual, challenging them to be open to God’s plan for their lives.*

Mt St John’s is a faith community of the Dorrigo community, the parish of St Mary’s, Bellingen and of the Diocese of Lismore.

We express our Catholic identity through the Religious Education program, daily prayer, classroom sacred spaces and liturgical celebrations.

The parish school uses the mandated Diocesan Religious Education curriculum and the resource text, “To Know, Worship & Love”. Catholic life and culture permeates school life with 2.5 hours of religious education taught formally each week. The implementation of the Diocesan Daily Prayer guidelines supports the school’s prayer life. The purposes of this parish school are centred on *Catholic Education in the*
Diocese of Lismore, the Foundational Beliefs and Practices – The Essential Framework. This Framework underpins all policy, planning, roles and processes within the parish school. Our aim is to increasingly integrate this statement into all aspects of parish school life. Religious Education is always given priority in our school and classroom curriculum and planning.

The parish school Mission Statement highlights the nature and calling of the school.

Mt St John’s caters for children from Kindergarten to Year 6. The following table indicates the student enrolment characteristics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>K</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>TOTAL 2011</th>
<th>TOTAL 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBOTE</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are currently 42 students enrolled in 3 classes.

School Curriculum

The school provides a comprehensive educational program based on and taught in accordance with the Board of Studies syllabuses for Primary Education. The Key Learning Areas are English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Human Society and its Environment, Creative Arts and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education.

The school continues to work towards developing 21st century pedagogy. Interactive technology is available in each learning space and staff members mentor each other to develop their skill levels.

A whole-school “buddy” reading support program takes place three times each week, with the senior students supporting younger children with their reading. This program also encourages positive student relationships throughout the school.
Student Performance in National Testing Programs

The school participated in the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) with students in Years 3 and 5 tested. In Year 3, 10 students presented for the tests while in Year 5 there were 12 students.

In Literacy there were four elements tested. These were reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation. In Numeracy, students were tested in number, patterns and algebra, measurement, data, and space and geometry.

The Commonwealth Government has set minimum acceptable standards for reading, writing and numeracy at particular ages. In Year 3, students who achieved Band 3 or higher have achieved above the minimum standard. In Year 5 those students who achieved at Band 5 or higher have achieved above the minimum standard set by government.

At Mt St John’s, school and student performance is closely monitored. These tests are one means of gathering data on individual student and school achievement. School staff have participated in Catholic Education Office-led information sessions on NAPLAN and SMART data analysis workshops.

The following data indicates the percentage of Mt St John’s students in each band compared to the State percentage.

Year 3 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 3 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy</th>
<th>Percentage of students in bands 1 to 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BAND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar and Punctuation</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number, Patterns and Algebra</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement, Data, Space and Geometry</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Year 5 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 5 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy</th>
<th>Percentage of students in bands 3 to 8</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BAND</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar and Punctuation</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number, Patterns and Algebra</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement, Data, Space and Geometry</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from the tables, the percentage of Year 3 students in the top three bands in Literacy is very pleasing. Sixty to seventy percent of students were placed in the top three bands. This strong performance was also recorded in Numeracy for the Year 3 cohort. Year 5 recorded strong results in the middle bands in both Literacy and Numeracy and the school plans to target this cohort to further develop student performance, especially in the area of Numeracy where the bulk of students achieved a middle band result. These results will be further analysed to inform and guide the direction of curriculum development and student learning.
## Teacher Standards and Professional Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Qualifications / Staff Profile</th>
<th>Number of Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Those having formal qualifications from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Those having graduate qualifications but not a formal teaching qualification from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Those not having qualifications described in 1 or 2 above but having relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate relevant knowledge.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teachers with recognised qualifications to teach Religious Education.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Number of staff identifying as indigenous employed at the school.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Total number of non-teaching staff employed in the school.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Whole-staff development day professional learning activities in 2011 were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Development Days</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parish School Staff Retreat Day</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>School Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Learning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dr Kath Murdoch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter- School Professional Visit</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Greg Ryan / Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Curriculum</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>CSO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally staff attended either singly or in groups a range of professional development opportunities including:

- Developing Numeracy Strategies
- Enrichment in the Classroom
- Religious Education
- Educational Leadership
- Information & Communication Technologies
- Persuasive Writing strategies
The professional learning expenditure has been calculated at $3,449.72 per staff member. This figure has been calculated by CEO and reflects expenditure on casual release days and professional development activities in particular categories.

Teacher Attendance and Retention

The average teacher attendance figure is 96.71%. This figure is provided to the school by the CEO.

There were no significant staffing changes last year.

Student Attendance

School attendance is high. The Class Roll is marked every day and rolls are checked each term. Unexplained absences are followed up promptly by classroom teachers. Parents are requested to provide a note to the teacher immediately the child returns to school. The principal is made aware of sustained student absences or absences reflecting a pattern. In these situations the principal or delegated staff member contacts the parent/guardian. Parents are encouraged to arrange medical and other necessary appointments outside school hours. Prolonged periods of absence occur from time-to-time for various reasons. In these cases students and their parents meet with the Principal to discuss their leave request.

The average student attendance rate for the school during 2011 was 92.3%. School attendance rates disaggregated by Year group are shown in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance rates by Year group</th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>96.7%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>94.5%</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
<td>95.4%</td>
<td>87.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School Policies

School policies are reviewed regularly. In 2011 the following policies were reviewed, updated or newly created:

- Evacuation Policy
- Lockdown and Critical Incident Policy
- Bullying Policy
- Suspension and Expulsion Policy
- Complaint and Concerns Policy
Enrolment Policy

Every new enrolment at Mt St John’s requires parents to attend an enrolment interview. The interview provides an opportunity to learn more about the educational experience provided by the school, specific school procedural policies and current school expectations.

Preference for enrolment is given to children of baptised Catholics. It is a condition of enrolment that all children will participate in class religion lessons and activities, as well as prayer celebrations and school and class Masses.

Children who turn five by 30 June are eligible to apply for enrolment in Kindergarten. Enrolments for Kindergarten children are called for in the year before commencement. Other enrolments are accepted throughout the year if there are vacancies in the classes concerned.

A copy of the enrolment policy is located in the school office or it can be accessed on the school’s website. The School Enrolment Policy explains the Parish enrolment guidelines.

Student Welfare Policy, Pastoral Care Policy

“Pastoral care is central to the ethos and identity of a Catholic school and it is essential that pastoral care for students be given a high priority. The role of schools as an educational institution is to encourage excellence, the pursuit of learning and the care of all individual students. The primary purpose of schools is to promote the full physical, social, intellectual, emotional and spiritual development of students. The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ’s teaching: this is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic School. (The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, n9.)”

Guidelines for Pastoral Care in Catholic Schools, CEC NSW

The following headings highlight the broad dimensions of pastoral care at Mt St John’s:

- school climate
- affirmation
- prayerfulness
- communication
- environment
- participation
- parental involvement
- special programs

Examples of these dimensions working in our school are:

- comprehensive and inclusive approaches to teaching and learning,
- fair and just assessment practices
- values education program
- health-promoting programs
- peer support activities
- school and class award system
- the liturgical and prayer life of the school;
- stimulating classroom environments
- orientation and transition programs
- behaviour management plan,
- parent participation and local community interaction.
Discipline Policy

Our discipline policy is grounded in both our Core Values and Code of Conduct statements. Each class agrees upon rules at the commencement of each year, under the headings of Safety, Learning, Respect and Self-Responsibility.

Students at Mt St John’s are expected to follow all school rules. The safety and learning needs of the students are paramount. If misbehaviour occurs the following strategies will be used:
- rule and behaviour reminders
- time out
- teacher-student conferences
- lunch-time reflections
- behaviour notes sent home and parent meeting.

If the behaviour is of a serious or repeated nature it may result in in-school suspension, suspension from school or expulsion.

Complaints and Grievance Policy

The school handbook provided to each parent on enrolment contains a section on parent-teacher contact. This school welcomes parent-teacher contact and suggests mutually acceptable times for interviews be arranged outside of class teaching time.

Early in each year, an insert in the newsletter asks parents to contact the school if there is a matter to be resolved. If a meeting with the class teacher does not resolve the issue, parents and teachers are encouraged to discuss the matter with the principal.

A full copy of the Diocesan Parent and Care Giver: Concerns and Complaints Policy is available on the school web site.

School Determined Improvement Targets

Each year the school develops an Annual Plan drawn from the five year Strategic Plan. 2011 was a very rewarding year. Listed below are a number of goals and priorities that the school focused on during the year. The parish school’s main goals and priorities were to:

- continue to develop strong literacy blocks;
- review numeracy practices and explore the concept of numeracy blocks;
- investigate inquiry models of learning;
- promote the language of learning in the school;
- make visible our Catholic identity.
Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

The school ensures that at every available formal and informal opportunity the values of respect and responsibility are promoted. The school models and teaches students about respect and responsibility in many ways.

The values of respect and responsibility lie at the heart of Catholic schools, and underpin all policies and procedures. Students, teachers and parents are regularly reminded of the school’s commitment to these and other school values by newsletter items, assembly messages and by the nature of our interpersonal relationships. In 2011 our core values were used in decision-making processes identified by the school community. Many of the awards presented to students throughout the year are indicative of these values. Respect and responsibility are fundamental to the way we act and treat each other at our school.

Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

The school uses a variety of methods to gauge parental, student and teacher satisfaction with school operations. The school understands the importance of regularly reviewing approval and satisfaction levels. Last year the following formal and informal opportunities allowed the school to test reaction to decisions, policy and school procedures:

- invitation, through newsletter, to provide feedback;
- formal surveys
- discussion of school issues at P & F meetings.

A formal survey was undertaken to identify student welfare needs at our school. A 20% return rate on this survey assisted the staff in completing an application for the National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program.
Financial Information

Catholic schools are accountable for all monies received. Each year, the Lismore Catholic Education Office submits to the Commonwealth Government a financial statement on behalf of the parish primary schools and secondary colleges. This statement details the income and expenditure of each school. In addition, the financial accounts for each school and for the Catholic Education Office are audited annually.

The following graphs represent the income and expenditure for the year ending 31 December 2011 as aggregated from the annual report to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and reported to the Commonwealth Government for 2011. Additional financial information is available on the MYSchool website.
2011 EXPENSE - Mount St John Primary School - DORRIGO

Salary & Related Expenditure 26%
Other Expenditure 4%
Capital Expenditure 70%