2011

Annual Report

St Patrick’s Primary School, Griffith

CONTACT DETAILS:

PRINCIPAL:  Mr Robert Keady
ADDRESS:  PO Box 1452
Griffith 2680
PHONE:  0269642888
WEBSITE:  www.spgww.catholic.edu.au
EMAIL:  info@spgww.catholic.edu.au
The School
Situated in the centre of Griffith, St. Patrick’s Primary provides affordable Catholic education to the children of Sacred Heart Parish and surrounding areas.

Being a large co-educational systemic school within the Diocese of Wagga Wagga, the students reflect the wide cultural and ethnic diversity of the area. The school is noted for its inclusive policy; catering for students with a wide range of learning needs and faith backgrounds. Our dedicated and qualified staff makes a concerted effort to assist all students to discover and nurture their gifts and talents, devising curriculum and extra curriculum activities to meet the needs of the student body. We have high expectations for all students and are proud of their academic achievements.

Programs to support students with physical and learning difficulties; strong academic ability and those who have English as a Second Language are evidence of this. Effort and achievement are valued as are the development of strong personal qualities such as respect, honesty and generosity. The school is noted for the attention given to pastoral care by staff and student welfare is a major school priority. Overall, we have a very happy, tolerant and harmonious school community who put into daily practice our school motto, “Do all things well.”

In late Term Three the schools policies and teaching programmes were evaluated by a CSO team for Board of Studies School Registration. Preparation for this took many months and the whole staff was involved in ensuring we met every requirement. The outcome was a very satisfactory report and the whole school community had reason to celebrate.

The school is blessed to have a magnificent physical environment in which to work, learn and play including over a hectare of gardens and grass playgrounds. School buildings are in excellent condition as the school maintenance program has ensured regular upgrades. The Commonwealth Governments BER program has added greatly to the facilities through both the building of new classrooms and the refurbishing and remodelling of others. In addition extensions to the Library, technology areas and adding a large school hall capable of seating over 700 people have ensured that the school is in fantastic condition.

Parent support for fund raising over many years has ensured our resources within the classrooms and specialist areas are first class. The provision of infrastructure and hardware such as the provision of Interactive Whiteboards in all classrooms are providing our school community with the technological resources to ensure students can become competent and critical users of a range of digital devices and programs.

Parental involvement underpins the work of staff and is a core element of the school ethos. An elected School Council oversees the budget, resources acquisition and forward planning as well as acting as a parent forum. It is assisted by the Parents and Friends Association which oversees social activities as well as fund raising.

Overall, St Patrick’s is a diverse, vibrant learning community supported by fantastic parents who wish their children to be educated in the Catholic tradition.

Catholic Identity
Religious Education in 2011 again was very busy yet rewarding. Staff work as a team with our parish priest Fr Andrew Grace and Fr. Peter to develop the faith aspect of children’s’ lives. Fr Rafe Beltrame continues to support teachers and students in Sacramental years and all three are visible in both classrooms and on the playing fields.

Liturgies and masses play an important part of Religious Education and all students attend mass on important feast days. Daily prayer in classrooms is emphasised and students are encouraged to develop a special relationship with our loving God.

The school-based Sacramental Programmes of First Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation are always well supported by our Parent and Parish Community. The presence of Bishop Gerard Hanna, prior to, and at Confirmation is very special to the Confirmation candidates and their families. He speaks openly and honestly to the students, deepening their understanding of Confirmation.

Students are actively encouraged to think of others and their needs. This includes raising money for the missions and community service. Money is raised through special
events for Caritas and our local St Vincent De Paul Society. The SRC organized fund raisers for these charities.

Kinder – Year 2 classes had special liturgical celebrations throughout the year including Mother’s Day and Father’s Day. Easter and Christmas were all celebrated through music, drama and readings. These Liturgies have amazing support from our parent community.

The internet is fast becoming a major resource tool for teachers when looking for information on units being taught in their classroom. The suggestions from the Resource Centre in Wagga have been invaluable.

We continue to work on building up resources for the Diocesan syllabus “Sharing Our Story” and use the “To Know, Worship and Love” resource in all grades.

Other programmes used to benefit students were the Seasons of Growth used with students who have encountered grief and loss and Making Jesus Real which had a real impact on the Year 6 students.

A Message from key School Bodies

2011 School Council Chairman’s Report

This year has been both a busy and exciting year for the School and School Council.

The start of the year saw the finalisation of $3.2 million dollars worth of upgrades to School facilities thanks to the Building the Education Revolution and National Pride in our Schools funding programs. This culminated with the official opening in June.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the work of the BER committee in overseeing this development which was capably led by Michael Ryan along with Nick Wordsworth, Fr Grace, Mr Keady and Ms Calabria. Without their dedication we would not have seen the results we have.

I would also like to acknowledge Forlico Builders for their outstanding work. They went above and beyond the call to ensure we not only achieved facilities that are the envy of all other schools but did so with minimal interruption to the school.

The final piece in completing our improvements is the Landscape Master plan. A draft of this has been completed and from the feedback I have received it has been warmly received. The challenge we now face is sourcing funding to implement the plan over the coming years.

The school also received a grant of $50,000 under the Solar Schools Program. This allowed us to install close to a 15kW system to offset our electricity costs and educate our children in sustainability.

Over the last 12 months we have embarked on a process of developing a School Strategic Plan. The plan sets the strategic direction of the school over the next five years. Its vision aims to ensure St Patrick’s is: a family oriented school grounded in the living and celebration of the Catholic faith. We aim to develop happy, adaptable, respectful children well balanced in body, spirit, heart and mind. We will facilitate their education and encourage development of their individual talents in order for them to achieve to the best of their ability.

It is the responsibility of not only the school council but the whole school community to drive this process to ensure the success of the plan.

The School continues to be in a strong financial position thanks to the outstanding work of Judy Kroek and Angela Favell and this will ensure that we can continue to keep fees as low as possible while meeting the educational needs our children into the future and offering the best facilities and resources of any school in Griffith.

I would like to thank and acknowledge the School Council members for their effort in contributing to the continued development of St Patricks Primary School to ensure it remains the best school in Griffith. I would also like to thank Michael Ryan, who is standing down from council after his 6 year term. Many of the achievements in the school such as the BER program are a result of his leadership and foresight. Mr Moraschi, who is the staff representative, has also done an outstanding job in his time of the Council.

I would also like to thank Mr Keady, Ms Calabria and in particular all the staff at St Patricks as without their support and dedication the school would not be the place
it is and our children would not receive the quality of education that they do. Finally, on behalf of the School Council I would like to wish Ms Calabria all the best in her new acting role as a CSO Education Officer.

Robert Kelly.
Chairperson

Student Outcomes in Standardised National Literacy and Numeracy Testing

The 2011 results were very positive and above the national average for both the Year 3 and Year 5 cohorts across all the strands. This reflects our school’s emphasis on the basic skills and the high level of achievement expected from all our students. Particularly pleasing was the high percentage of students in the top two bands for Reading and Numeracy in both grades. They are significantly above the Australian Schools Average. Equally pleasing was the low representation in the bottom two bands.

However Spelling was the standout area with 36% of Year 3 and 11% of Year 5 achieving in the top band compared to 18% as the national average in Year 3 and 8% in Year 5.

Student gain between Years 3 and 5 for both Reading and Numeracy was greater than 1. Those from statistically similar schools 2. The average achievement of students in schools with the same starting scores and 3. The average achievement of all students

The school analyses the NAPLAN Trend Data each year and uses the analysis information to pinpoint areas of collective and individual weakness and strength. Teachers incorporate this data to assist with outcome and programme selection.

Our results and student gain between Years 3 and 5 can be found on the ACARA website. www.myschool.edu.au;

Professional Learning

Staff at St Patrick’s Primary view themselves as lifelong learners and value the role professional learning plays in preparing teachers for the twenty-first century. The Diocesan Conference for all staff on Professional Learning was a real incentive for all staff to discuss and reflect on best practice and current educational thinking. Staff undertook a number of professional development programmes during PD days, twilight sessions and afterschool. These included;

Training in a tracking/assessment programme called Gradexpert which all staff can now use. Additionally staff engaged with peer ICT training to ensure competence/mastery of the many digital devices utilised across the school.

Undertaking a comprehensive persuasive assessment writing course completed online and via DVD from ACER

All staff took the opportunity to visit at least one school and assess their general teaching/learning practices or view specific aspects such as providing for Autistic students over the year. Eight teachers also went to visit several Melbourne schools with colleagues from Catholic Schools in neighbouring towns as part of our decision to form a Learning Community across several Diocesan schools. The feedback from all these trips and staff dialogue has been inspirational.

All staff updated their CPR Qualifications and a number of staff completed their Senior First Aid updates.

Individually, a number of staff attended in-services, state and national conferences on a variety of topics.

Teaching Staff

The NSW government requires that this report detail the number of teachers in each of the following categories:
A) have teaching qualifications from a recognised higher education institution within Australia
B) have qualifications from a recognised higher education institution within Australia but no formal teacher education qualifications
C) have relevant successful teaching experience and appropriate knowledge but no formal teacher qualifications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Workforce Composition

We are privileged to have a staff that is both very experienced and fully qualified. Of the twenty-one full time teachers, four are male and seventeen are female. The majority of staff has been teaching for at least 15 years.

The eleven part time teachers mainly occupy support roles and offer specialist instruction such as English as a Second Language, Reading Recovery, Special Needs and Sport. We have an Italian Language specialist teacher who teaches all students in the school each week.

There are three classes who have job share teachers.

Student Attendance

Student attendance rates for each Year level and the whole school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Attendance %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>93.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>94.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>94.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>94.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>93.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>92.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinder</td>
<td>94.04%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Non-Attendance

Absentee sheets are posted on the staffroom noticeboard and given to the Principal and Assistant Principal each day. Absentee sheets are then checked and if a student has had more than five days of unexplained absences away from school a phone call is made to the family for an explanation. If a child continues to be absent the matter is investigated by either the class teacher or the Assistant Principal and the Pastoral Care worker may follow up with a home visit. If no resolution is evident the Principal will contact the relevant authorities and report the extended absence.

Notes are sent home regularly to parents who have not sent absentee notes back.

Enrolment Policy

- The Principal and Assistant Principal are responsible for enrolments at St Patrick’s Primary School.
- All Catholic children who are members of the Sacred Heart Parish will be given priority.
- Enrolment of children from other Christian faiths will be considered.
- Children from non-Christian families may also be enrolled.
- All parents will give a firm undertaking that they will accept and support the life, nature and identity of the Catholic School, including the participation of their children in religious education programs.
- No child is to be denied Catholic schooling simply because of an inability, as against an unwillingness to pay.
- All parents enrolling their children in a Catholic Diocesan school must complete the official enrolment form and return it.
- Birth and Baptismal Certificates are required at the time of enrolment. We also require an Immunisation Certificate.

St Patrick’s Primary School welcomes children from the Griffith pre-schools to come and have a look and a play at the school. These visits occur before Orientation Day which is held in November.

On enrolling a child at St Patrick’s School, an information package is given to the family. There is then an interview with the parents and child and a tour of the school.

Characteristics of the Student Body

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Indig’</th>
<th>LOTE*</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>288</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>529</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Language background Other Than English

Structure of Classes

The following table is the number of students within each grade at St Patrick’s School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kinder</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School Policies

Discipline
St Patrick’s School believes that every child has the right to learn and play in a safe and happy school environment. It is expected that students respect the right of other students to learn and teachers to teach. This policy establishes a code of behaviour that encourages students to be self disciplined and to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

Student Welfare
St Patrick’s fosters an atmosphere of co-operation in which everyone’s feelings are respected and where student self-esteem is valued and supported. We will foster sound student management by creating a total school environment that contributes to a sense of well being for all staff and students.

Complaints and Grievances
The school has adopted an approach to resolving complaints and grievances that is based on procedural fairness. It recognises that parents/caregivers and students must have access to processes that allow them to resolve concerns in a supportive and conciliatory way.

Parents/students with a complaint are encouraged in the first instance to contact their class teacher. If the need then arises contact with the Principal and the Catholic Schools Office may be appropriate.

Our approach is based on the policy of the Catholic Schools Office.

Changes to School Policies
Our school went through the process for registration this year. All policies, curriculum documents, teacher programs and assessment plans were diligently worked on to ensure that the process would be successful. As a consequence, all policies are current and written in a manner acceptable to the review panel.

Improvement Targets
The school’s Strategic Framework for 2011 involved the following curriculum areas:

# Religious Education – continue to implement the Diocesan Syllabus. Provision for Executive and Staff to attend CSO Retreats; continuance of the school based sacramental programmes and student centred faith based workshops on Making Jesus Real and Godly Play.

- Coming together on a regular basis for prayer and mass
- Supporting Sacred Heart Parish. e.g. assisting with sacramental programs, taking on parish roles such as church cleaning and assisting with children liturgies, mass reading, special ministers.
- Ensuring that children from faith backgrounds other than Catholic are valued and their faith traditions recognised.
- Making explicit, with the consensus of our school community, the values we wish to emphasise.
- Continuing the work done with staff on Restorative Justice Practices.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND OPERATIONS; POLICIES AND CURRICULA

- All Policies and Curricula as well as Teacher Programmes to be reviewed during the Registration process and made available to staff electronically on the Intranet.
- Implementation of the First Steps Writing Programme.
- Continue with programs that support learning: Reading Recovery, Language classes (both funded and unfunded), ESL, Personal Interest Projects (Gifted & Talented), Jolly Phonics, Grade Writing Assessment and Special Needs Program.
- Critically evaluate our NAPLAN results as well as the grade literacy and numeracy work seeking to improve student learning and staff teaching.

LEADERSHIP, ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

- Role Statements for staff members need to be updated.
- Continue to implement marketing strategies.
- Seek ways of providing opportunity for staff members to take on leadership roles.
- Ensuring statutory compliance elements are updated – e.g. CPR, Child Protection, Chemical Safety, Harassment, Evacuation and medical updating.
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

- In-servicing support for ICT including Interactive Learning.
- Providing opportunities for teachers to attend professional development including teachers needing to comply with the NSW Teacher Institute Accreditation.
- Teachers will implement the First Steps Writing program and train in the ACER Persuasive Writing program.
- Engage a professional mentor to assist teachers with numeracy strategies.

Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

Respect and Responsibility are core aspects at our school. Students, staff and parents are expected to behave in a respectful manner towards each other at all times in accord with the Gospel example provided by Jesus and in line with the School Pastoral Care and Behaviour Management Policies. All students are expected to be polite, well mannered and well behaved at all times. Our school is proud of the conduct of the students and this is particularly so when students go on excursions and sporting representation.

Examples of student responsibility include The K/Year 6 Buddy programme, Student Representative Council and Sport Captain leadership. Year 6 were trained under the Making Jesus Real programme to understand issues such as social justice, earth care and respect for all as well as doing community service as part of their Confirmation preparation.

A Centacare employed school counsellor works at the school for two days each week providing specialist support to students with emotional and social problems. As well a pastoral care worker/chaplain is employed at the school under the Commonwealth Government’s Chaplaincy Program.

FACILITIES AND RESOURCES.

- Complete the refurbishment of school buildings and the new hall constructed with BER funding.
- Developing a total landscape plan for the grounds and vehicle and pedestrian access. Employment of a professional designer to complete this task.
- Implementing the ICT plan developed by the Computer Committee including providing wireless access to all areas of the school.
- Continuing to seek government programs and initiatives that will provide finance for specific purpose programs e.g. environmental grants, Solar Grants

These priorities listed for last year were addressed.

- School Registration was completed.
- Improving NAPLAN results across all strands for both grades.
- Literacy initiatives were instituted for Writing, Vocabulary training, ESL and Special Need students,
- ICT was heavily emphasised. Utilising the Interactive Whiteboards in all classrooms, PCs in the classrooms and the fixed and mobile laptops.
- Increasing the professional development opportunities for all staff and raising the level of awareness of educational change.
- Completing the buildings, renovations and upgrading of facilities built using the Commonwealth Government funding under the BER programme and School Council funding allocated to ensure all facilities are outfitted to best standard possible.

Community Satisfaction

The following information has been provided to the school. It has been a valuable gauge for determining the level of satisfaction the community has with our school.

Parents
My child (son or daughter) is usually happy at St Patrick’s Primary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>82%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students
I am usually happy at St Patrick’s Primary School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>79%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Staff
I am usually happy at St Patrick’s Primary School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Financial Statement Summary

School Income

- Fees & Private Income: 16%
- State Recurrent Grants: 18%
- Other: 5%

School Expenses

- Salaries, Allowances & Related Expenses: 77%
- Other: 15%

About This Report
This report was prepared by the Principal, members of the School Executive and teachers with responsibility for specialist learning areas.