



St Gerard's Catholic Primary School Carlingford

2012 Annual Report



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1. Message from Our School Community

1.1 Message from the Principal

This Annual School Report outlines the significant activities undertaken, and achievements gained by our school during the 2012 school year. The report acknowledges the central contribution of the strong community and learning partnership which is shared by the teachers, students and parents.

St Gerard's Catholic Primary School is proud of its Catholic tradition and works constantly to promote excellent teaching and learning within a challenging and supportive school environment. This is underpinned by our mindfulness of the school motto, 'Growing in Wisdom and Faith' and is evidenced in our commitment to quality education.

The school underwent a comprehensive reflection and review process during the year and all areas of compliance, policy and procedures were evaluated. The quality of school learning programs in the areas of Catholic Life and Mission, Teaching and Learning and Pastoral Care were also appraised.

The outcome was a strong affirmation of the school's learning programs, pastoral care, sense of Catholic Mission and procedures. The Chair's report stated "We leave assured that the school meets regulatory requirements and that Catholic Education is in a very healthy state at St Gerard's Catholic Primary School, Carlingford".

I would like to thank all members of the school community; in particular, our dedicated teachers, enthusiastic students and generous parents for their contribution to the school's continued success. In 2012 especially, the collaboration of the staff during the whole School Review process and hospitality of the St Gerard's community was recognised in the Report. We are now re energised to take up recommendations for further development.

1.2 Message from the Parent Body

The St Gerard's School Parents and Friends (P&F) committee collaborates with the school to provide additional resources for the school and also works to contribute to the community life of the school.

A combination of the funds provided through the P&F levy, sales from the Uniform Shop and individual fund raising activities such as School Discos, Walk-a-thon and a very successful community Christmas Market enabled the Parents' and Friends' committee to provide funds for a planned improvement to the school back gate area, books for the library and continue the sponsorship of the Year Six Graduation Function, Welcome Barbeque and the Mothers' / Fathers' Day stalls. Funds also are added to gold coin days which the student social justice team organise and the combined amounts are donated to Caritas.

President of the St Gerard's Parents' and Friends' Committee

1.3 Message from the Student Body

In Year 6 we became role models to everyone, especially our Kinder Buddies. Not only did we teach them but they taught us so much as well. My buddy brightens up my day and is always kind towards others. The Leadership camp at the beginning of the year and our overnight excursion to Canberra were amazing; a great bonding experience for us all. St Gerard's has blessed me with the gift of education and has taught me to value my friends and family, use my God given talents to the best of my ability and also to appreciate the talents of others and how to lead as Jesus would. Thank you to the staff of St Gerard's for teaching and taking care of us. Lastly thank you to my classmates for their friendship and my parents for their love and support.

Year 6 School Captain



2. School Profile

2.1 Student Profile

The following information describes the student profile for 2012:

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Indigenous	Total Students
179	150	82	0	329

*Language background other than English

2.2 Enrolment Policy

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

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

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

2.3 Staff Profile

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

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

a	b	c	Total
26	0	0	26

Further information about the staff profile can be found in the School Facts section of the school's profile page on the *My School* website.

2.4 Teacher Attendance and Retention Rates

The average teacher attendance rate during 2012 was 96%. This figure does not include teachers on planned leave.

The teacher retention rate from 2011 to 2012 was 88%.



2.5 Teacher Satisfaction

Teachers have the opportunity to feedback satisfaction and evaluate effectiveness each term. Informal feedback via evaluation, staff meetings and interviews indicate that staff appreciated their professional learning opportunities. Members of the Leadership team were involved in several Leading Learning sessions focusing on the principles of 'School Improvement'. This year significant time was spent reflecting on the past school Learning, Pastoral and Mission achievements as a way of preparing for Whole School Review. They found the focus group structure of professional learning effective. They valued the opportunity to work in smaller teams and with their Stage partners. Also they valued the opportunity to have ownership on the 'critical reflection' process and were very involved in presenting achievements and challenges to the School Review team. Teachers also appreciated the community support with the purchasing of IWB Technology for Stage Two classrooms and the purchase of iPads for small group use in classrooms. Staff reported appreciation for "time" to up skill on new technology and for the block of staff meeting time given to Stage meetings to discuss assessment and evaluation. This has contributed to the identification of the need for a Whole School Assessment Plan in Mathematics be developed by the team. There was overall appreciation for the efficient and considerate way in which the Leadership Team prepared for School Review and staff felt affirmed by the Chairperson's Report.

2.6 Student Attendance and Retention Rates

Year	Average student attendance rate (%)
K	96%
1	95%
2	95%
3	96%
4	98%
5	96%
6	97%

The average student attendance rate for 2012 was 96%.

Management of non-attendance: In order for students to reach their full potential it is of paramount importance that they attend school regularly. While it is the parents' legal responsibility under the Education Act to ensure that their children attend school regularly, our staff as part of their duty of care, monitor all absences and work in partnership with parents to support and promote the regular attendance of students. In doing so the school, under the leadership of the Principal:

- provides a caring environment which fosters in students a sense of wellbeing and belonging;
- maintains accurate records of student attendance;
- implements policies and procedures to monitor student attendance and to address non-attendance issues as and when they arise;



- communicates to parents and students, the school's expectations with regard to student attendance and the consequences of not meeting these expectations; and
- recognises and rewards excellent and improved student attendance.

School attendance records also contain information regarding student absences including reasons for absence and documentation to substantiate reasons for absences. Teachers are required to monitor non-attendance diligently on a student by student basis and to bring to the attention of the Principal immediately any unexplained absences, non-attendance of a chronic nature, or reasons for non-attendance that cause concern. Matters of concern are referred to the Principal, the Catholic Schools Office and the relevant Department of Education and Training officer where appropriate.

Where a student is not able to attend school for a prolonged period of time due to a medical condition or illness, the school in collaboration with parents provides resources to contribute to the student's continuum of learning where possible.

The Catholic Schools Office monitors each school's compliance with student attendance and management of non attendance on an annual basis as a minimum, as part of the system's School Review and Development processes.

2.7 Student Satisfaction

As a result of informal interviews with groups of students, feedback indicates that students have a high degree of satisfaction with the school camps and excursions, participating in school sporting events, playing on the oval and participating in school assemblies. Senior students report strong satisfaction with working in the Buddy Program. Feedback about the role of particular leadership teams was insightful and gave some new directions to team formation in the future. Students would like roles to be more explicit. Working with technology continues to be an area of high satisfaction for students in Stages 2 and 3 and the younger students are very satisfied with the opportunity to engage with iPads. Younger students report satisfaction with using the play equipment eg. cricket nets, however some would like more choice of play activities.

The Kids Garden has seen a large amount of student satisfaction and learning with the Year 1 children and teachers. The senior students enjoy all opportunities to engage in whole school events. A team of students chosen from across the Grades enjoyed their opportunity to talk to the School Review panel about Learning and Life at St Gerard's.



3. Catholic Life and Mission

3.1 Catholic Heritage

At St Gerard's the teachers work explicitly to incorporate the Christ centred values contained in the school's Mission and Vision statement, into the daily life of the school. It is here that we acknowledge our faith as part of the Broken Bay Diocese and are supported locally by the Parish of Epping and Carlingford.

St Gerard's Parish school was founded by the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy and commenced in 1964. Sister Mary Norbert was the first school Principal and was assisted by two lay teachers. The growth of the school was rapid and further building projects were completed in 1967, 1968 and in 1969.

In 2007 the parishes of Epping and Carlingford amalgamated to form the Parish of Epping and Carlingford. This was done under the pastoral guidance of Father Colin Blayney. This historical event was celebrated with a combined Mass between the two parishes and a picnic followed to commemorate the occasion. Each year the two schools of the combined parishes, Our Lady Help of Christians, Epping and St Gerard's, Carlingford, come together to celebrate this union.

The Mercy tradition of service and support for the school is still evident in our school culture today. We are proud of the contribution made by the Mercy Sisters and only hope that we never lose that sense of 'service to' and 'love of' school that our past generations have displayed. We continue to pronounce our Catholicity through signs and symbols and our outreach to others and our awareness of the needy. As a school community we are committed to Catholic discipleship and to valuing and respecting our students and their families.

During our enrolment process parents are reminded of the Catholic identity and mission of the school and that it is an expectation that they will support the living out of that mission.

3.2 Religious Life of the School

2012 has been a liturgically rich year. We have celebrated many Masses and liturgies as a school community including Beginning of School Year, Ash Wednesday, ANZAC Day, Mothers' Day, Easter Season, Pentecost, Combined Schools, Fathers' Day, St Mary of the Cross, Respect and Gratitude, St Gerard's Feast Day, Remembrance Day, Year 6 Graduation and the Advent Mass. Teachers and school staff attended the annual Diocesan Mass at the Cathedral. During the last week of Term 1 we also commemorated the events of Holy Week. Year 3 prepared a liturgy based on the events of Holy Week, and parents and families were invited to join us. During the year and particularly at Lent and Advent, we participated in prayer and reflections during our regular Monday assemblies. These prayers were either based on the Gospel readings from Sunday Mass or they were based on Catholic values which we strive to teach, model and uphold within our school community.

Each month school parents shared responsibility for planning the monthly children's liturgy for the parish Sunday Mass, and our St Gerard's students were involved in the children's liturgy and altar serving.

The Parish Sacramental Program was supported by parents who act as hosts or group facilitators. Communication was maintained with the Sacramental Programme Coordinator and the Religious Education Coordinator, with regular updates going home in the School Newsletter and Parish Bulletin.

The parish Youth Co-ordinator worked with the Religious Education Co-ordinator and Year 6 teachers to plan and facilitate a reflection morning for the Year 6 students.

Each month senior students in the Hospitality Team assisted with serving morning tea at the Healing Mass parish morning tea. They also made conversation with the elderly parishioners to build a rapport and relationship with these parishioners. Throughout the year the choir sung for the elderly in the parish at the healing Mass morning tea.



The final Healing Mass of the year was followed by a Christmas Lunch, where two students from Years 5 and 1 played the violin and the cello to entertain the parishioners.

A group of students was accompanied by the Religious Education Coordinator to visit Chesalon Nursing Home twice a term to provide comfort and support to the elderly residents.

3.3 Catholic Worldview

At St Gerard's Carlingford, we uphold the school Mission and Vision through providing students, staff and the wider school community with opportunities to grow in wisdom and faith.

As a school we provide opportunities for staff, students and the wider school community to be involved in initiatives that allow outreach and service of others. At St Gerard's we are realising the Catholic Worldview through social justice activities that have been organised by the Social Justice Team including donating money to Project Compassion during Lent, running pancake days, going to Chesalon Nursing Home to provide comfort and support to the lonely, selling cupcakes as fundraising for Catholic Mission, setting up and running stalls to raise funds and awareness for Candella Mission and donating money to St Vincent de Paul. During Mission month, the issue of extreme poverty was addressed with staff and students through the Mission resources and modules. The Parents and Friends Committee also made significant contributions to Project Compassion.

The Year 6 students produced Discipleship Responses which were sent to the Bishop. This provided the students with an opportunity to reflect on themselves as Disciples of Jesus and to express how they viewed Discipleship within the context of their school experience. The students produced their Discipleship responses in a number of formats such as letters, PowerPoint presentations, posters and visual representations.

In the classroom, the Catholic Worldview perspective is addressed through all new modules in Religious Education and is integrated into other Key Learning Areas. Students are also involved in meaningful experiences of prayer and liturgy throughout the year.

3.4 Professional Learning in Catholic Life and Mission

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

All teachers are accredited to teach Religious Education at St Gerard's in accordance with the Diocese of Broken Bay's policy on the Professional Requirements for the Accreditation of Teachers of Religious Education.

All school staff participated in a staff development day on spirituality in Term 3. The day was facilitated by two members of the CSO Mission Team. Staff had the opportunity to participate in scripture studies, quiet meditation and they learnt about the life of St Gerard.

The day allowed the teachers to participate in a range of activities which can be used in the classroom to allow for more rich and meaningful Scripture activities.

The teaching staff continued to develop Models of Contemporary Learning for RE modules, following on from the professional learning from 2011.

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established an [Accreditation Policy for Staff in the Diocesan School System in respect to the Mission of the Church](#) which is implemented by all systemic schools in the Diocese.



4. Pastoral Care

4.1 Diocesan Policies

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established [Pastoral Care](#) and [Student Discipline](#) Policies including Student Welfare and Anti-Bullying, which are implemented by all schools in the Diocese.

The implementation of these policies is monitored by the Catholic Schools Office.

4.2 School Implementation of Diocesan Policy

This year the school implemented phase two of a behaviour program, Positive Behaviours for Learning. A school PBL team has been renewed with two new teacher members from different Stages and a new CSO facilitator has conducted several sessions with teachers. The skills taught within this program are used to underpin the implementation of the Pastoral Care policy at the school. The newsletter contains regular reminders about school rules, behaviour expectations and safe school procedures. A PBL symbol has been developed to catch parents' attention when reading the newsletter to reinforce the school focus for the fortnight. The teachers are required to teach anti-bullying lessons explicitly each term and on need. The Principal visits all classrooms each term to emphasise the importance of school rules and ways of behaving in a safe school environment.

4.3 Pastoral Care of Families

Both formal and informal supports exist for our school families. The class parent network supports parents when a family is in need of extra assistance, e.g. meals, transport. The Diocesan School Counsellor provided professional assistance to several students and families. The school Parent Liaison Representative communicates through the school newsletter when parent talks are being offered. The Principal meets with families who have asked for pastoral assistance and finds ways to offer the most appropriate support.

4.4 Resolving Issues

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established a [Complaints Handling Policy](#) which is implemented by all schools in the Diocese.

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

4.5 Occupational Health and Safety

Each school is required to implement and comply with the Diocesan School System Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS). This system reflects the current statutory requirements for OHS and complies with the Australian Standard for OHS Management Systems. The OHSMS adopted by the CSO for Broken Bay Systemic Schools has been designed to address general health, safety and welfare matters and also to take account of specific issues that apply to school communities. The management system supports the provision of a 'safe and supportive' environment for all students as well as taking into account the health, safety and welfare of staff, visitors and contractors to the school site.

Principals, in consultation with the relevant CSO personnel, are responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with OHS legislation and for the implementation of the management system in keeping with the Catholic Schools Office's Annual OHS Plan. External OHS system audits are conducted across a sample of schools each year to validate the implementation of the management system.



5. Excellence in Teaching and Learning

5.1 Quality Teaching and Learning

The teaching staff at St Gerard's Catholic Primary School is committed to continuous improvement of teaching and learning in all facets of the school curriculum. In 2012, the school underwent the process of School Review. During Terms 1 and 2, the teaching staff were able to reflect upon the areas of strength in providing quality teaching and learning as well as the opportunity to identify areas for continued improvement.

St Gerard's was successful in accessing an Asian Education Grant for 2012. The Teacher Librarian in consultation with the school Leadership team, led the staff in a review of HSIE units of work and the integration of Asian Perspective. An external facilitator assisted teachers developing units of work and literacy resources were purchased to support the incorporation of Asian Perspective at each Stage level.

During Term 3, staff worked with Diocesan Education Officers who facilitated learning in English by developing understandings of best practice in Literacy and of the components of the Literacy Block. Classroom teachers worked to imbed these practices into their daily classroom routines.

The effective use of Information and Communication Technologies is an important tool in enhancing teaching and learning for students today. This year iPads were introduced as a means of integrating mobile technology into classroom learning experiences. School-based professional learning sessions were facilitated by members of staff to enhance the teachers' use of these new technological tools.

Differentiated learning in mathematics and in particular student performance in the area of Number, has been identified as an area for improvement by the teaching staff at St Gerard's. During 2012, the staff commenced work in this area and introductory professional learning sessions with a Numeracy educational consultant was a key component in this ongoing improvement plan. Towards the end of 2012, an audit of resource material to support learning in Mathematics was conducted. Thanks to the wonderful efforts of the St Gerard's community, points earned in the Woolworths 'Earn and Learn' program were used to purchase new resources that will support quality teaching and learning in Mathematics in the future.

5.2 Student Achievement

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

Several points should be noted:

- **In Year 3**, students placed in Band 1 are achieving below the national minimum standard. Students in Band 2 are achieving at the national minimum standard. Students in Bands 3 – 6 are performing at a standard deemed to be above the national minimum standard. Students in Bands 5 and 6 are "at proficiency".
- **In Year 5** students in Band 3 are achieving below the national minimum standard. Students in Band 4 are achieving at the national minimum standard. Students in Bands 5 – 8 are performing above the national minimum standard. Students in Bands 7 and 8 are "at proficiency".
- Students who were exempted from any test were deemed not to have met the national minimum standard in that test area and are not included in band distributions.



- State data for Band distributions is sourced from the School Measurement and Reporting Toolkit (SMART2), developed by NSW Department of Education and Training. All national data and state figures for the percentage at or above national minimum are sourced from the NAPLAN Summary Report (Preliminary Results for Achievement) published by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). All school data is sourced from SMART2. Because figures are rounded and exempted students are not included in Band distributions, percentages may not add up to 100.
- In the 2012 cohort, there were 49 students in Year 3 and 48 students in Year 5.

Detail on school performance is provided in the following tables. Band distributions and percentages of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard are shown separately for Years 3 and 5. Additional information can also be accessed from the *My School* website (<http://www.myschool.edu.au/>).

Band Distributions (%) – Year 3

		Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6 (+)	% at or above national minimum
Reading	State	3.5	10.1	15.6	20.6	23.8	26.4	94.8
	National	4.5	9.3	15.7	21.5	21.5	25.5	93.5
	School	2.0	6.1	14.3	8.2	42.9	26.5	98
Writing	State	1.7	5.0	13.8	22.3	41.3	15.9	96.3
	National	2.7	4.9	13.7	30.0	31.9	14.8	95.3
	School	2.0	2.0	8.2	16.3	44.9	26.5	98
Spelling	State	3.4	7.5	13.4	25.4	20.2	30.1	95.5
	National	4.0	8.9	17.5	23.8	22.1	21.8	94.0
	School	2.0	2.0	10.2	16.3	24.5	44.9	98
Gr. & Punct.	State	5.1	7.4	12.7	19.0	22.0	33.7	94.6
	National	5.0	8.0	14.4	21.1	22.1	27.5	93.0
	School	2.0	0.0	6.1	22.4	18.4	51.0	98
Numeracy	State	3.8	9.3	20.2	27.8	21.2	17.7	95.0
	National	4.2	11.4	21.7	27.4	20.9	12.5	93.9
	School	0.0	6.1	2.0	38.8	24.5	28.6	100

In Year 3, 98% of the students were above the national minimum in Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation. In Numeracy, 100% of the students were above the national minimum. The percentage of our students in the top two Bands for all assessment areas is above the state percentage, with an average between 14- 19% more students achieving in these Bands. Less than 4% of students scored in the lowest 2 Bands in Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation. Areas for further improvement are to reduce the percentage of students in the bottom two Bands in Numeracy and Reading.



Band Distributions (%) – Year 5

		Band 3 (-)	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6	Band 7	Band 8 (+)	% at or above national minimum
Reading	State	7.7	10.0	22.8	24.5	21.5	13.6	93.1
	National	6.2	11.6	22.1	26.5	19.5	11.9	91.8
	School	0.0	0.0	12.8	34.0	21.3	31.9	100
Writing	State	5.5	8.4	34.1	28.8	14.5	8.7	93.8
	National	5.8	12.6	30.1	30.1	14.1	5.3	92.2
	School	0.0	0.0	23.4	29.8	27.7	19.1	100
Spelling	State	3.8	11.3	17.9	26.1	24.5	16.5	94.4
	National	5.4	11.7	22.2	27.1	20.3	11.3	92.6
	School	0.0	0.0	12.8	34.0	36.2	17.0	100
Gr. & Punct.	State	7.8	12.8	20.8	23.5	14.5	20.7	92.3
	National	7.6	12.5	22.0	25.0	17.9	13.0	90.4
	School	0.0	4.3	12.8	29.8	25.5	27.7	100
Numeracy	State	5.2	11.8	23.9	28.0	15.4	15.8	94.7
	National	4.6	13.5	25.7	27.5	17.1	9.6	93.4
	School	0.0	4.3	19.6	34.8	15.2	26.1	100

In Year 5, 100% of the students were above the national minimum in all areas. The percentage of our students in the top two Bands for all assessment areas is above the State percentage, with an average in the various categories falling between 12- 20% more students achieving in these bands. What is pleasing to note is that 0% of Year 5 students scored in the lowest 3 Bands in areas of the NAPLAN assessment. Areas for further improvement are to increase the percentage of students in the top 2 Bands in future assessments.

University of New South Wales Competitions

Many of our students participated in the University of New South Wales Competitions in 2012. Our results are listed below:

In English, 33 children participated. St Gerard's received 2 High Distinctions, 2 Distinctions and 17 Credits.

In Writing, 26 children participated. St Gerard's received 2 Distinctions and 5 Credits.

In Spelling, 30 children participated. St Gerard's received 1 High Distinction, 5 Distinctions and 14 Credits.

In Mathematics, 48 children participated. St Gerard's received 1 High Distinctions, 6 Distinctions and 16 Credits.

In Science, 26 children participated. St Gerard's received 7 Distinctions and 7 Credits.

In Computer Skills, 24 children participated. St Gerard's received 1 High Distinctions, 7 Distinctions and 3 Credits.

Maths Olympiad

In 2012, 16 students from Years 5 and 6 who demonstrated a talent in the area of Mathematics were offered the opportunity to participate in an extension program with an emphasis on problem solving. This team of 16 students also participated in the Australasian Problem Solving Mathematical Olympiads (APSMO) Maths Olympiad competition. This competition is provided to schools within Australia and neighbouring countries. The APSMO Olympiads consist of 5 separate contests involving rigorous problem solving activities where students compete on an individual basis as well as contributing to overall team scores.



5.3 Extra Curricula Activities

St Gerard's is committed to offering a variety of opportunities to cater for students' interests beyond the curriculum. Students are able to take part in a variety of activities. These include:

- Veggie Patch and Gardening club – including the selling of veggies at assembly;
- Science Challenge (students from Years 5 and 6);
- International Competitions and Assessments for School competitions (Years 3 to 6, voluntary);
- Public Speaking (Years 2 to 6) and Diocesan Public Speaking Competition;
- participation in soccer, netball and rugby gala days;
- selection to representative teams (Cluster, Diocesan etc.);
- sport opportunities in Swimming, Cross Country and Athletics;
- Diocesan selection for sports (tennis, hockey, cricket, rugby etc.); and
- Stage 3 students participated in the Diocesan A3 Choral Festival.

Band

The St Gerard's Senior and Junior Bands involve fifty students who have specialist lessons every Tuesday. They perform at school functions as well as special musical evenings for their parents. Members of the Senior Band are also involved with celebrating the coming of Christmas in the community.

Choir

Our School Choir consists of forty students who learn and rehearse before school. The choir leads the school at Masses and celebrations and performs at community events.

Chess

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

Leadership Formation

The senior students in Year 6 participate in a leadership camp early in Term One. The focus is on leadership, team work, self-confidence and facing challenges with the support of a team. This three day experience is highly valued by the students and teachers, as an opportunity to work on individual personal strengths as well as to develop skills on ways to contribute to team work.

Our senior students in Year 6 play an active role in the life of the school. Each student is a member of various leadership teams designed to promote student leadership and student voice in our school. The leadership teams are formed to cover Social Justice, Liturgy, Hospitality and Library.



5.4 Professional Learning

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

The school held five whole staff days in 2012. The focus of these days was as follows:

Term 1 - 2012 School Improvement Planning

Term 1 - Planning for the School Review process

Term 3 - Staff spirituality

Term 4 – 2 days devoted to:

- introduction to the Extending Mathematical Understanding (EMU) initiative;
- professional learning and skill development in using the Mathematical Assessment Interview (MAI); and
- 2013 planning.

Other professional learning opportunities; with various staff attending the following:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder workshops;
- Professional learning sessions with an external facilitator on differentiating student learning in Mathematics;
- Child Protection;
- CPR Course;
- Anaphylaxis Course;
- Cluster network meetings in Numeracy and Literacy; and the
- Principal, Assistant Principal and Leadership Team took part in the CSO Leading Learning initiative.

Two teachers participated in the Early Career Teachers Program offered by the Catholic Schools Office and a member of staff was a mentor teacher for this program. One staff member completed New Scheme Teacher accreditation process to a very high standard. One staff member commenced studies at a Masters level.



6. Strategic Initiatives

6.1 2012 Priorities and Achievements

The main areas of focus for the School Improvement Plan were:

MISSION

To deepen understanding of Catholic Doctrine, through the teaching of RE units based on the Inquiry Model and Models of Contemporary learning.

TEACHING and LEARNING

To improve students learning outcomes in Mathematics, through the use of differentiation of the mathematics curriculum and quality assessment tasks.

PASTORAL CARE

To continue the implementation of the Positive Behaviours for Learning Programme and strengthen the PBL steering team strategies using an external mentor.

6.2 2013 Priorities and Challenges

The main areas of focus for 2013:

MISSION

To strengthen student and community understanding of our school's spiritual traditions and heritage.

TEACHING and LEARNING

To improve students mathematical understanding in Number through:

- the introduction of the Extending Mathematical Understanding program; and
- introducing a whole school on line Mathematics Assessment and tracking program

PASTORAL CARE

To strengthen the Positive Behaviours for Learning program and embed it into everyday behaviour management practices K-6.



7. Parent Participation

7.1 Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

7.2 Parent Satisfaction

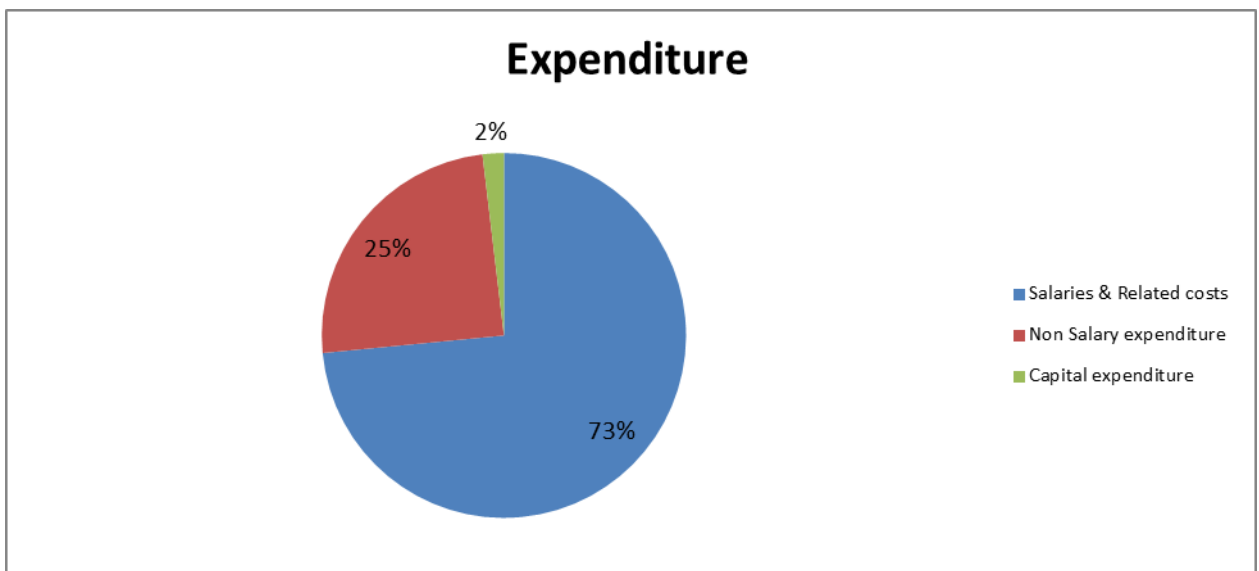
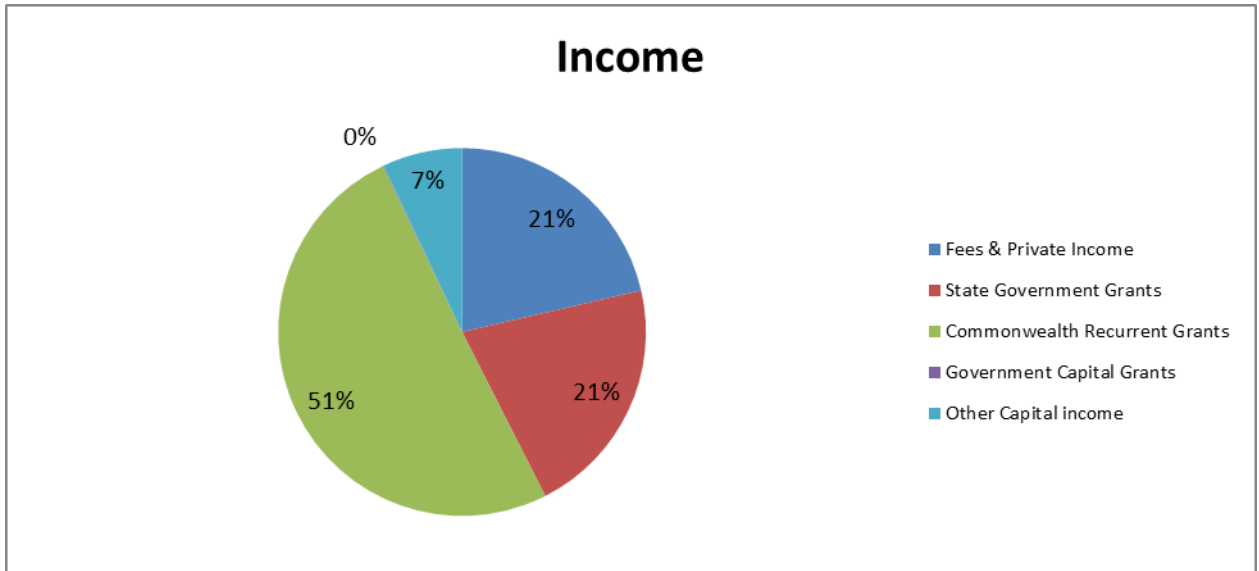
A strong majority of responses to a formal survey conducted as part of the whole School Review process reported mainly 'strongly agree' and 'agree' responses in the area of Catholic Life and Mission, Pastoral Care and Community and in Curriculum Teaching and Learning. They are particularly satisfied with the communication and Religious Leadership of the school and with the articulated values and mission. They also were strong in their view that the school was a student-centred, safe and supportive environment and that the teachers at the school treated the students with respect. Parents reported a strong sense of trust in the school/parent relationship. The least favourable response was in relation to assessment and reporting.

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



8. Financial Report

Consistent with Board of Studies requirements, financial income and expenditure for this school is shown in the graphs below. More detailed financial data is available on the "myschool" website at <http://www.myschool.edu.au>. Diocesan system financial reporting can be found in the Diocesan school system Annual Report, which will be available at <http://www.csodbb.catholic.edu.au>



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