



St Gerard's Catholic Primary School Carlingford

2013 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 2013 school year. The report acknowledges the outstanding contribution of our community and the strong 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 teaching and desire to grow as a learning community.

The school underwent a comprehensive reflection and review process during 2012 and recommendations have been prioritised. The outcome is the current School Improvement Plan.

I would like to thank all members of the school community; in particular, our dedicated and skilled teachers, enthusiastic students and generous, energetic parents for their contribution to the school's continued success. In 2013, the collaboration between school, parents and in particular the Parents and Friends Committee, has resulted in many achievements. We are proud of our improvements and look forward to celebrating our 50th year in 2014.

1.2 Message from the Parent Body

The P & F collaborates with the school Principal and other staff members to provide additional resources for the school as well as fostering the sense of community at the school. On behalf of all St. Gerard's parents, the P & F committee would like to thank the school Principal and the school staff for the hard work, commitment and energy they have devoted to the academic and spiritual education of our children this year, as well as their continual support of the committee.

2013 has been a very successful year for the St. Gerard's school community. From a combination of 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 very successful Mothers' and Fathers' Day stalls, the P & F have been able to contribute to a number of planned improvements to the school such as the new back fence and gate; new books for the Library; Interactive White Boards (IWBs); new laptops; a contribution to the loan for the Covered Outdoor Learning Area (COLA); as well as continuing the sponsorship of the Year Six Graduation Function, Welcome Barbeque, Fathers' Day Breakfast and donations to Caritas and St. Vincent de Paul.

The P & F would like to formally thank all those parents who have devoted their time, energy and skills to all of the events this year as well as their continual help in the classrooms, tuckshop, uniform shop, working bees and other school maintenance. Your commitment has contributed to St. Gerard's school being a wonderful place for our children to grow in wisdom and faith.

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 2013:

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Indigenous	Total
184	166	76	0	350

*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:

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

a	b	c	Total
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 2013 was 96. This figure does not include teachers on planned leave.

The teacher retention rate from 2012 to 2013 was 96%.



2.5 Teacher Satisfaction

Teachers have the opportunity to feedback satisfaction and evaluate effectiveness each term. Informal feedback via evaluation, formal surveys, staff meetings and interviews indicate that staff appreciated their professional learning opportunities. Teachers were involved in several Leading Learning sessions focusing on the principles of 'School Improvement'. This year significant time was spent on Extending Mathematical Understanding and training in the Mathematics Assessment Interview. High levels of satisfaction were noted in learning sessions where teachers had tried new ideas and strategies and successes were celebrated.

They valued the opportunity to work in smaller teams and with Stage partners. Also they valued the opportunity to reflect on their learning as a staff team and about their achievements in relation to the School Improvement Plan for 2013. Teachers in Kindergarten and Year One also appreciated the community support with the purchasing of IWB Technology. Opportunities to learn about Google Apps were acknowledged.

2.6 Student Attendance and Retention Rates

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

The average student attendance rate for 2013 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
- 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

The students have voiced in a Student K-6 survey and through informal interviews, a high degree of satisfaction with the school's Leadership Camp, excursions, participation in the Science challenge, Library learning time, the musical showcases, fundraising activities, Stage sport, sports carnivals, HSIE cultural investigations and mathematical learning in the classrooms.



Working with technology continues to be an area of high satisfaction. The students have shown engagement and are highly satisfied with the inclusion of iPads and the use of Interactive Whiteboards in teaching and learning.

The K-2 children have greatly enjoyed their new outdoor spaces and the increased variety of play choices in the Infants' playground environment. The Veggie Garden has been popular with the Year 5 students. They have greatly enjoyed leading the other classes on guided tours, explaining their role and what is being grown and sold.



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, 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

2013 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, 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 week 9 of Term 1 we also commemorated the events of Holy Week. Year 4 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 Co-ordinator and the Religious Education Co-ordinator, with regular updates going home in the School Newsletter and Parish Bulletin.



Parish events were also communicated to parents via the weekly school newsletter after communication between the REC and the P&F Parish Liaison Officer.

The parish Youth Co-ordinator worked with the Religious Education Coordinator to plan and facilitate 3 reflection mornings for the Year Six students.

Throughout the year, senior students in the Hospitality Team have 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 sang for the elderly in the parish at the healing Mass morning tea.

A group of students was accompanied by the Religious Education Co-ordinator 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. We provide students, staff and the wider school community opportunities to grow in wisdom and faith and 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, holding a 'Crazy Sock Day' to fundraise for Catholic Mission, setting up and running stalls to raise funds and awareness for Candela Mission and donating money for St Vincent de Paul. The Christmas Gift Giving for 2013 was Operation Christmas Child where the students organised Christmas gifts for less fortunate children somewhere in the world. 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 Caritas Australia.

The Year Six students produced Discipleship Responses which were sent to the Bishop. This provided the students with an opportunity to live and grow as Disciples of Jesus and to express how they viewed Discipleship within the context of their school experience. The students produced their Discipleship responses as PowerPoint presentations.

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 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.

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 prayer in Term 4. The day was facilitated by a member of the Diocese of Broken Bay Office for women. Staff had the opportunity to reflect on 'What is Prayer?', explore and discuss the patterns of the psalms, the contexts of prayer, as well as discussing K-6 prayer at St. Gerard's. This day was followed by a staff meeting on prayer which was led by a member of the CSO Mission Team. The staff meeting allowed staff to experience and learn how to teach the scriptures in a creative way. The strategies explored 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.





4. Pastoral Care

4.1 Diocesan Policies

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established [Pastoral Care](#) and [Behaviour Management 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 continued to implement 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 and Procedures](#) which is implemented by all schools in the Diocese.

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

4.5 Work Health and Safety

Each school is required to implement and comply with the Diocesan School System Work Health and Safety Management System (WHSMS). This system reflects the current statutory requirements for WHS and complies with the Australian Standard for WHS Management Systems. The WHSMS 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 WHS legislation and for the implementation of the management system in keeping with the Catholic Schools Office's Annual WHS Plan. External WHS 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

At St Gerard's Catholic Primary School we are committed to the continuous improvement of teaching and learning in all facets of the school curriculum.

The School Improvement Plan 2013 focused on providing quality teaching and learning in the area of Mathematics. Our whole school intent was to promote enthusiasm, confidence and success in Mathematics for our students.

In 2013, we participated in the Extending Mathematical Understanding Program (EMU) – a program undertaken by the Catholic Schools Office in collaboration with the Australian Catholic University. The Extending Mathematical Understanding Program (EMU) enabled us to identify student understanding in Mathematics according to Growth Points and then provide intervention for those students who are vulnerable in the area of Mathematics. Teachers engaged in professional learning on the Extending Mathematical Understanding Program, including the use of a Mathematics Assessment Instrument (MAI) to assess student understanding in Mathematics. Teachers also participated in ongoing professional learning throughout the year that addressed effective pedagogical practices to improve student learning in Mathematics.

To support learning in Mathematics resourcing continued to be a priority. In Term 2, resources such as bead kebabs for each student and bead strings were made with the assistance of parents for counting and number work in each classroom. Towards the end of 2013, over 200 "Maths Tool Kits" were made for students to support learning in Mathematics in 2014.

The effective use of Information and Communication Technologies to enhance teaching and learning for students today continues at St Gerard's. This year we focused on how IT can assist teachers in the area of assessment and reporting.

The following was developed and implemented in 2013:

- use of online student assessment tools (Progressive Assessment Tests – PAT Assessments) in Reading and Mathematics;
- a student tracking system that allows teachers to maintain student data in one location and to track student progress from year to year; and
- a web based reporting system that enables teachers to access and work on reports from home as well as school.



This year Windows 7 was implemented across the school. This involved intensive professional development for all members of staff as well as increased expenditure to purchase the necessary hardware to support this program. Teachers continue to use interactive whiteboards as an effective tool to promote learning. The final stage of installing interactive whiteboards to all classrooms (K-6) was completed this year.



5.2 Student Achievement

Students in Years 3 and 5 undertook tests as part of 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 Communities. 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 2013 cohort, there were **(52)** students in Year 3 and **(45)** 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	2.8	9.7	16.3	24.6	18.7	27.9	96.3
	National	2.8	8.7	17.3	23.5	22.6	23.2	95.3
	School	0	5.8	3.8	23.1	26.9	40.4	100
Writing	State	2.0	5.5	15.2	23.1	37.0	17.2	96.1
	National	3.1	5.2	14.3	28.8	29.9	16.7	95.0
	School	3.8	0	1.9	28.8	50	15.4	96
Spelling	State	4.4	5.6	17.6	22.8	24.3	25.3	95.5
	National	4.2	9.2	17.2	24.9	23.0	19.5	93.9
	School	0	0	19.2	13.5	26.9	40.4	100
Gr. & Punct.	State	3.2	7.5	14.2	20.7	23.7	30.7	96.4
	National	2.8	7.2	14.8	22.3	24.0	27.1	95.3
	School	0	3.8	5.8	25	26.9	38.5	100
Numeracy	State	2.8	8.3	21.5	28.7	24.8	14.0	96.5
	National	2.3	9.9	23.9	30.4	20.6	11.0	95.8
	School	0	1.9	13.5	32.7	28.8	23.1	100

In Year 3, 100% of the students were above the national minimum in Reading, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation and 96% of students in Writing. 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 10- 20% more students achieving in these Bands. Less than 4% of students scored in the lowest 2 Bands in Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation, and Numeracy. The area for further improvement to reduce the percentage of students in the bottom two Bands is Reading.

Band Distributions (%) – Year 5

		Band 3 (-)	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6	Band 7	Band 8 (+)	% at or above national minimum
Reading	State	1.8	9.4	22.6	28.9	22.1	15.3	97.0
	National	1.9	9.9	23.4	30.0	21.9	10.9	96.2
	School	0	0	4.4	22.2	33.3	40	100
Writing	State	6.3	8.8	32.3	29.7	15.2	7.8	93.1
	National	6.4	11.8	28.1	31.8	15.0	5.1	91.7
	School	0	2.2	15.6	17.8	40	24.4	100
Spelling	State	5.5	8.1	21.1	27.3	24.7	13.2	94.4
	National	5.0	11.7	23.1	27.9	19.5	10.9	93.1
	School	2.2	4.4	8.9	20	35.6	28.9	98
Gr. & Punct.	State	4.6	9.3	21.8	22.3	23.1	19.0	95.8
	National	3.3	10.5	22.7	28.3	21.2	12.0	94.8
	School	0	0	17.8	13.3	33.3	35.6	100
Numeracy	State	5.1	15.1	25.7	26.4	13.0	14.8	94.0
	National	4.7	15.4	26.4	26.7	15.7	9.3	93.4
	School	0	4.5	15.9	22.7	22.7	34.1	100

In Year 5, 100% of the students were above the national minimum in Reading, Writing, Grammar and Punctuation and 98% of students in Spelling. 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 26- 40% more students achieving in these bands. What is pleasing to note is that 0% of students scored in the lowest 2 Bands (Band 3 and 4) for Year 5 NAPLAN assessment in the areas of Reading and Grammar and Punctuation. In Numeracy and Writing we had less than 5% of students in the bottom Bands. The area for further improvement is to reduce the percentage of students in the lower Bands in Spelling (6.6%) and 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 2013. Our results are listed below:

In English, 33 children participated. St Gerard's received 1 High Distinction, 8 Distinctions and 14 Credits.

In Writing, 24 children participated. St Gerard's received 1 High Distinction, 5 Distinctions and 4 Credits.

In Spelling, 34 children participated. St Gerard's received 1 High Distinction, 7 Distinctions and 10 Credits.

In Mathematics, 42 children participated. St Gerard's received 1 High Distinctions, 2 Distinctions and 20 Credits.

In Science, 17 children participated. St Gerard's received 2 Distinctions and 9 Credits.

In Computer Skills, 23 children participated. St Gerard's received 5 Distinctions and 7 Credits.

Maths Olympiad

In 2013, 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. These 24 students (10 boys and 14 girls) 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; and
- Diocesan selection for sports (tennis, hockey, cricket, rugby etc.).





Band

The St Gerard's Senior and Junior Bands involve over fifty students who have specialist lessons every Tuesday. They perform at school functions as well as special musical evenings for their parents. This year an additional band session was facilitated on Thursday mornings for the Performing Band. The Performing Band entertained the school community at a variety of functions and also during the end of year festivities.

Choir

Our School Choir consists of over 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 every Wednesday during lunch time. The students take their 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 2013 that supported the School Improvement Plan for 2013 and utilised both staff expertise and Catholic Schools Office's Consultants.

The focus of these days was as follows:

Term 1 – Numeracy focus and Extending Mathematical Understanding Program.

Term 2 – Introduction to the Australian Curriculum.

Term 3 - Staff spirituality – Prayer.

Term 4 – 2 days devoted to:

- continued professional learning and implementation of the Australian Curriculum – English and Mathematics; and
- handover of student data and 2014 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;
- CPR Course;
- Anaphylaxis Course;
- various technology-related professional learning opportunities including the introduction of Google Apps For Education;
- Cluster network meetings in Numeracy and Literacy; and the
- Principal, Assistant Principal and Leadership Team took part in the CSO Leading Learning initiative.





6. Strategic Initiatives

6.1 2013 Priorities and Achievements

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

MISSION

To broaden student understanding of their Catholic identity in the contemporary world.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

To improve students mathematical understanding in number.

PASTORAL CARE

To strengthen PBL practises in support of positive behaviours for learning.

6.2 2014 Priorities and Challenges

The main areas of focus for 2014:

MISSION

To strengthen student understanding of our spiritual traditions and heritage through the celebration of 50 years as a Catholic Parish School.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

To improve students mathematical understanding in Number through:

- assessing the whole school in number using MAI; and
- using whole school on line Mathematics Assessment and tracking program to inform teaching.

PASTORAL CARE

To strengthen student wellbeing and social skills.





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. They assist in the promotion of the school through marketing meetings, liaising with feeder preschools to distribute information about open days or special events.

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 raises funds for the school and also plays 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.

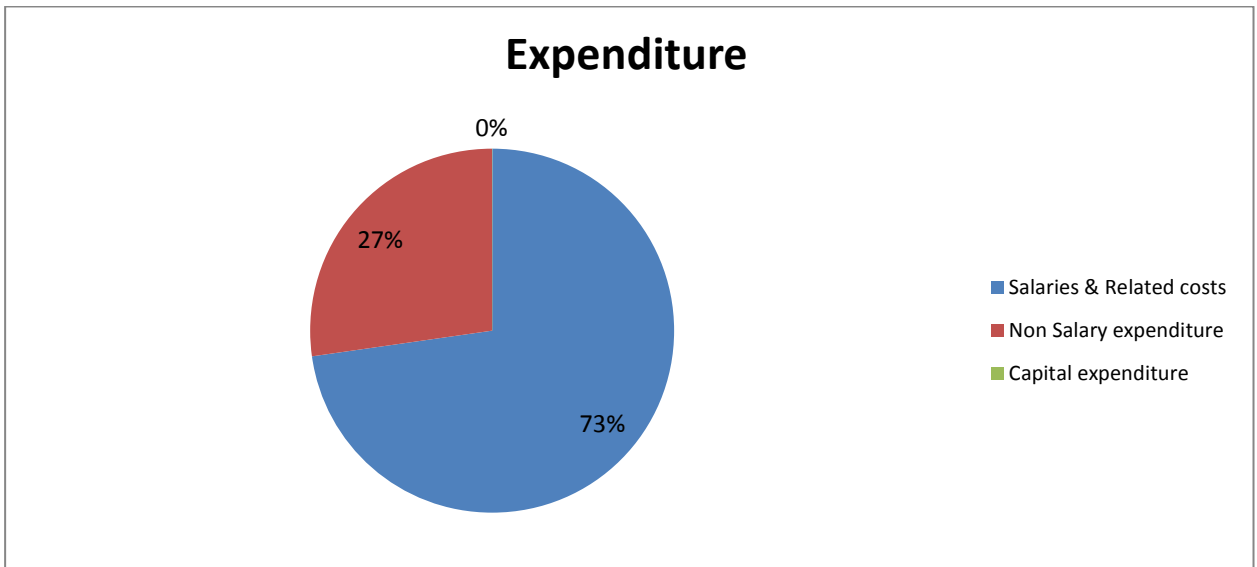
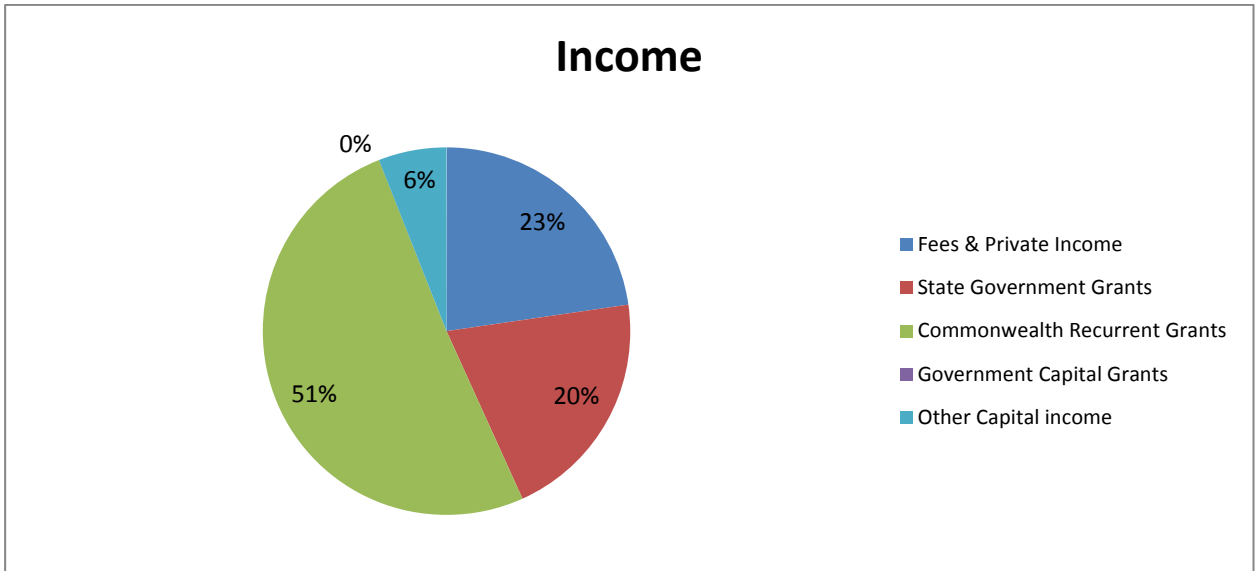
7.2 Parent Satisfaction

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. Strong support was verbalised at a parent meeting for the introduction of on site Outside of Hours School Care service. Parents reported to teachers that the introduction of a new student report format is pleasing. This year's improvements to school facilities such as; new Infants' playground areas, a Covered Outdoor Learning Area (COLA), back gate area improvement, new garden areas, NRMA grant road safety banners have been well received. Evaluations from parents who attended Parent Education workshops in Extending Mathematical Understanding (EMU) were very positive.



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.