

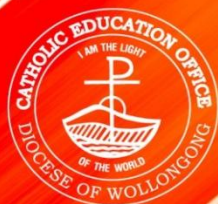
Annual School Report

2012

St. Thomas More



Ruse



About This Report

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, Ruse is registered by the NSW Board of Studies (BOS) and managed by the Catholic Education Office (CEO), Diocese of Wollongong. The CEO is the 'approved authority' for the Registration System formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act 1990.

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

The Report also outlines information regarding School Review & Improvement (SRI) initiatives and developments of major interest and importance to the school community during the year and the achievements arising from the implementation of the school's Action Plans.

Accordingly, the Report demonstrates accountability to regulatory bodies, the school community and the CEO. This Report has been approved by Wollongong CEO to ensure compliance with all NSW Board of Studies requirements for Registration and Accreditation.

This Report complements and is supplementary to school newsletters and other regular communications. Following its submission to the NSW Board of Studies, the Report will be presented to the Parent Body and be available on the school's website by 30 June 2013.

Further information about the school or this Report may be obtained by contacting the school:

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School

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Parish Priest: Fr Tony Daly

Principal: Mrs Tina Murray (Acting Principal)

Date: 14 December 2012

Vision Statement

In the spirit of truth and love the vision at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School is to be a welcoming community committed to upholding the dignity of the individual where quality learning and teaching is inspired by the message and life of Jesus.

Message from Key School Bodies

Principal's Message

It is with great pleasure that, as Acting Principal, I present the Annual School Report for the 2012 School Year.

During this year, our community has continued in our endeavour to create a learning environment that meets the needs of all. As a staff, we have continued to focus upon the identification of students across the spectrum of the learning continuum, and have attempted to more effectively differentiate within mainstream classrooms in an attempt to cater for the learning needs of all students. We have focused on attempting to engage parents as partners in the learning of their children by offering workshops for the parents of identified students.

The Annual School Report provides an opportunity for the community to reflect on, and celebrate, the significant achievements that have occurred throughout the 2012 School Year. I acknowledge and thank the students, staff, pastor, parents, Parish and wider community for the way they have contributed to the effective operation and development of our Catholic learning community.

As St Thomas More Catholic Primary School enters a new phase of change and transition, as a result of a change in leadership, our desire to be a learning community focused on meeting the needs of each student remains at the forefront of all that we do.

Parent Involvement

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School is a school where the parent body is committed to it being a place of community and support for all the families who attend the school. In 2012, the school discos, Feast Day BBQ, working bees, Carols night and other activities continued to provide opportunities to display how strong the parent involvement is at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School.

This was also clearly evident by the success of the 2012 School Fete. It was a tangible and visible display of how the St Thomas More community works together within the various capacities including the Fete Committee, Mothers' Club, Parents & Friends (P&F) Committee and of course, the many past and present parents, relatives and friends who volunteered on the day.

Finally, much gratitude is extended to the staff at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School. Their support and partnership has been the key to the success that we have enjoyed throughout this year.

Parents and Friends Association, Diocesan Delegate

Student Leadership

The 2012 school year at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School was an adventurous and memorable year for everyone, especially the Year 6 students. We started the year by welcoming our school community at the Annual Opening School Mass. During this Mass, we welcomed Mr Bryan Doyle MP to our school, to commission our school leaders.

As school leaders, we represented St Thomas More during our Year 6 camp, visiting our Australian Parliament in Canberra and the greater Canberra and Snowy Mountain regions. It was a great experience for everyone. We also participated in the Campbelltown community's Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) Day ceremony. Some of our indigenous students went to Minto to participate in the 'Sorry Day' Liturgy reflecting upon the apologies made to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Our Stage 3 students represented our school by showing their talents through art, at the CEO Wollongong Christmas Art Exhibition and Competition. During the year, Stage 3 students also had the opportunity to participate in the Annual Public Speaking Competition. Representation at various sporting events, such as Diocesan Sport Carnivals, Gala days, and school carnivals, were a highlight during this year.

Celebration of our faith is very important to us. As student leaders, we helped present the Stations of the Cross at Maryfields. Bishop Peter visited our school and helped to prepare us to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. We also celebrated Prayer and Conversation with Bishop Peter and other Year 6 students from neighbouring schools. We prepared the Remembrance Day Liturgy and participated in the Diocesan Spirit Alive Festival. Meeting our new 2013 Kindergarten students and their parents during Kinder Orientation was also a highlight of our year. To support our community, we helped out at our school Fete, started our school Mini Vinnies Group and we ran Mufti Day and Busking day fundraisers; this was to support a little girl and her family in our extended community, who are struggling with cancer.

Thank you to our Parish Priest, the Staff at St Thomas More and our parents for providing a wonderful education for us. Thank you to the Parents & Friends Association and the Mothers' Club for fundraising to support our learning needs. Finally, thank you for this opportunity to be members of the St Thomas More School Community. We wish everyone the best for the future.

School Leaders

School Profile

School Context

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School is a two stream Kindergarten to Year 6 systemic school and has a current enrolment of 367 students. The school is located in the Parish of Ruse and is under the direction of the Catholic Education Office Wollongong. St Thomas More traditions have been enriched from the foundational charisms of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan and the Marist Brothers. The school endeavours to cater for the spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, behavioural and physical education of all students. St Thomas More Catholic Primary School has fourteen mixed ability classes and a Learning Support Centre, which supports the needs of students with an identified learning disability. As a Parish School, it is intended that the spiritual growth and welfare of the students be carefully integrated within a needs-based education, which is a shared responsibility of the Parish Priest, Principal, Staff and Parents.

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School is a school which promotes stewardship by valuing, respecting and encouraging the unique gifts of every person. The school places a strong emphasis on building resilience and operates successful Peer Support and Buddy programs. St Thomas More Catholic Primary School is committed to the creation of contemporary and future-oriented learning programs, where educational excellence is encouraged, by providing a relevant, stimulating and challenging curriculum that incorporates the use of learning technologies. The students are able to access laptops, iPads, online resources and State-of-the-art interactive whiteboard technology which supplement and enhance innovative teaching and learning programs. Students are given many opportunities: academic, sporting, religious and cultural, to discover and make the most of their talents and they regularly participate in Diocesan and local community events. St Thomas More Catholic Primary School is a school where students, staff, parents and pastor work and celebrate together in a spirit of true partnership.

Student Enrolments

2012 Enrolments	
Boys	192
Girls	175
Total	367
Indigenous	11
LBOTE	105

The Diocesan Enrolment Policy and Procedures exists to assist schools in the equitable prioritising of enrolment applications and in order to ensure that the requirements of State and Commonwealth legislation are met. This documentation can be found on both the school website: www.stmdow.catholic.edu.au and the CEO website: www.dow.catholic.edu.au.

No changes were made to this Diocesan Policy in 2012.

Student Attendance

2012 Attendance (%)	Male	Female
Year 1	89.5	90.9
Year 2	92.7	90.0
Year 3	90.6	90.9
Year 4	88.8	91.1
Year 5	90.0	92.3
Year 6	87.7	88.1

Management of Student Non Attendance

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. Schools, in partnership with parents, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, school staff, as part of their duty of care, monitor part or whole day absences.

Each class teacher had the responsibility of recording class attendance rolls each day, either manually or via the Diocesan Realtime Roll portal. The data was transferred or entered manually into the School Accounting System (SAS). It was a school expectation that if students were absent from school, a written note explaining the absence was provided to the class teacher, which in turn was documented and archived by office staff. An email to the school explaining the absence was also acceptable. If an explanation for an absence was not received, a reminder note requesting an explanation was sent to parents. If two such notes were not returned then a “unexplained/ unjustified” absence was documented. In the event of a child having an excessive number of unexplained absences, contact with the parents was made by the Principal or representative to investigate the circumstances related to these absences. If a child left school early they were issued with a pass, which indicated that the school was aware of their absence. Parents were required to apply for Principal approval to exempt their child from school for extended periods. Full and partial absences were documented on student reports each Semester.

Staffing Profile

There were a total of 20 teachers and 12 support staff at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School. The composition of the workforce included 16 full-time and 4 part-time teachers.

Teacher Standards

Teacher qualifications fall into 1 of 3 categories for all teaching staff responsible for delivering the curriculum:

Teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised by AEI - NOOSR*	100%
Have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia within AEI-NOOSR* guidelines but lack formal teacher qualifications	0%
Do not have qualifications as above but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context	0%

**Australian Education Institution – National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition Staff Retention*

Teacher Attendance and Retention

The average daily teacher attendance rate for 2012 was 98.13%. This did not include planned leave such as Maternity or Long Service Leave. The teacher retention rate from 2011 to 2012 was 80 %.

Professional Learning

During 2012, St Thomas More Catholic Primary School personnel undertook a range of professional learning activities related to improving student outcomes, particularly through School Review & Improvement priorities.

These included:

A. St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, whole school development days involving (32) staff.

These days focused on:

- Staff Spirituality Day – Building a communal staff spirituality;
- Kath Murdoch – Exploring the Inquiry Approach – This day focussed on developing a student centred pedagogical practice using the Inquiry approach; and,
- Learning Communities Project – Varied Paths for All - this project built upon the shared understandings developed during previous projects related to gifted education. It enabled staff to explore available methods and strategies to assist in the

differentiation of learning for identified gifted and talented students within the classroom setting.

B. Other professional learning activities provided at school level including CEO run courses:

- Focus on Literacy: Writing in Stage 2 and 3 (3 staff);
- Focus on Numeracy: K-2 (2 staff);
- Leading the Australian Curriculum (3 staff);
- MANSWA Conference (3 staff);
- Origo Mathematics Conference (1 staff member);
- Best Start Training (3 staff);
- The University of Wollongong's Leadership Conference, (2 staff);
- Learning for Leadership (1 staff member);
- Beginning Teacher Professional Development (2 staff);
- Beginning Teacher Mentoring (4 staff);
- Gifted Education (1 staff member);
- School based Professional Development on Gifted Education, including within class support (17 staff);
- Lamplighters – Spiritual Development for Leaders (4 staff)
- Berekah – Spirituality (2 staff);
- A light for the World Personal Spirituality Formation Experience (2 staff);
- Shining Lights Personal Spirituality Formation Experience (3 staff);
- Igniting the Fire Personal Spirituality Formation Experience (2 staff);
- Religious Education Coordinator (REC) Conference (1 staff member);
- Principal/Assistant Principal Retreat (2 staff)
- Religious Literacy Assessment (3 staff);
- School Wide Positive Behaviours for Learning (SPB4L) Project, facilitation (5 staff);
- Sue Larkey Workshop (2 staff);
- Autism course (1 staff member);
- South West Sydney PDHPE Conference (2 staff);
- Live, Life, Well (2 staff);
- Active Afternoon Training (1 staff member);
- Leading Learning Technology (1 staff member);
- Smart Board Beginners Technology (1 staff member);
- Spotlight on Technology (6 staff);
- PLANE Project (1 staff member);
- Oliver (Reference System fro Libraries) Training (1 staff member);
- Reading Recovery Training and Support (2 staff);
- Oral Language Support for Early Literacy (2 staff);
- School based professional development on supporting students with expressive or receptive language needs, including within class support (15 staff);
- Peer Support Training (1 staff member);
- Anaphylaxis Training (30 staff);

- John Hattie Visible Learning Seminar (1 staff member);
- Effective Use of Data (3 staff);
- Indigenous Cultural Awareness (1 staff member);
- Sacred Art, Illustration and Drawing (1 staff member);
- Storytelling 3-6 (2 staff)

The average expenditure by the school on professional learning per staff member was \$300. In addition, professional learning opportunities were provided by the Catholic Education Office with an additional average expenditure per staff Member of \$759.

Catholic Life & Religious Education

Religious Literacy Assessment

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School seeks to promote its own Catholic Identity in the tradition of the Catholic Church. This is done through ensuring that there is a visibility throughout the school of symbols of the Catholic Faith and most importantly, through the provision of quality prayer experiences and liturgical celebrations for all within the community.

In 2012 the school continued to develop a strong relationship with the Parish community. The Parish Priest was very active in the school community, visiting each class at least once per term. Each term the Parish Priest administered the Sacrament of Penance to Years 3-6 children. He also met each grade from Kindergarten to Year 2 in their classroom for class prayer liturgies or discussions about the content covered in the Religious Education (RE) curriculum. The Parish Priest also celebrated many whole school Masses in the School Hall.

In 2012, every term all students travelled by bus to the Parish Church to celebrate Mass with the Parish community. The school also organised weekend Parish Masses, which were led by St Thomas More Catholic Primary School guitar and choir groups. Families and Parishioners were invited to all the celebrations aligned with the Catholic Life and Religious Education of the school.

The concept of 'stewardship' continued its development into the St Thomas More community. In this regard, the students participated in 'Stewardship Week' in which Morning Prayer and Religious Education (RE) lessons focused on the concept of stewardship. In 2012, Stewardship Week was held in conjunction with Catholic School's Week, to further enhance core traditions of Catholic Education and the sharing of Gospel values with the community. Stewardship Awards were presented at each whole school assembly to acknowledge students for sharing their time, talents and treasures – the fundamental principles of stewardship.

A community highlight of the year for 2012 was the Catholic School's Week Grandparents and Special People Mass. During this Mass, the grandparents and carers in the children's lives were acknowledged. The students shared morning tea with their grandparents. Afterwards some of the grandparents shared stories and their experiences of growing up with the students.

Another community highlight was the Busking and Mufti Day which raised funds for a child in the Macarthur Area who was seriously ill. The students performed dances, played musical instruments and organised a variety of entertaining items to raise over \$1 200 for this needy family. This was truly "church in action" and a proud moment in the school's history.

Prayer was an integral part of St Thomas More school life. Each day began with school prayer being said during morning assembly. A prayer focus was evident in class RE lessons. Many memorable liturgies were celebrated during 2012 such as the Opening School Mass, Ash Wednesday, All Saints Day Mass, Thanksgiving Mass and feast day celebrations such as the Feasts of St Thomas More and St Mary of the Cross. An important event of 2012 was the Holy Week concert led by our students and visiting musician Andrew Chinn. A Lenten Prayer group in which parents and staff participated was run within the school to assist with personal spiritual preparation for Easter. The School acted as facilitator of the Macarthur Schools for the Lenten Stations of the Cross that was hosted by the Franciscan priests at Maryfield. St Thomas More Parish hosted the Annual Campbelltown Catholic Club Communion Mass and our school leaders welcomed the many guests that attended. Our School participated in the Spirit Alive Festival at John Therry Catholic High School and our display attempted to share the many and varied ways in which the school strives to be 'church in action'.

In 2012 the school established a Mini Vinnies Conference. The students in this team meet each fortnight in the Prayer Room. They prayed together, listened to stories of success and planned and organised social justice Initiatives, including fundraising activities for St Vincent de Paul, Catholic Mission and Project Compassion. Approximately \$2 500 was donated to these worthy causes, as well as many food hampers and Christmas presents. The Year 3 students organised and sent 62 Care Packages to Military personnel serving overseas. This initiative was recognised in an address to Parliament made by our Federal Member.

Members of the school indigenous community attended the Sorry Day Service at Minto. The students participated in prayer and shared morning tea with other children from various schools in the Macarthur as well elders from the Macarthur Indigenous community.

The St Thomas More Catholic Primary School students were active participants in the Parish Sacramental Program. In 2012, each of the Sacramental Programs were supported by the RE lessons within the classrooms. The staff of St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, along with the Parish Priest, acted as leaders for all lessons in the Parish Based Sacramental Program. The Religious Education Co-ordinator (REC) and other staff members liaised with the Parish Sacramental Team to ensure that Parish/School communication was maintained.

The reception of the Sacrament of Penance took place in Term 1. The Sacrament of the Eucharist was celebrated in Term 2 and the Sacrament of Confirmation in Term 3.

In Term 2, Year 6 had the opportunity to participate in the Diocesan Prayer and Conversation Liturgy with the other Year 6 students from the Macarthur region. This was hosted at St John the Evangelist Church in Campbelltown. Bishop Peter Ingham celebrated the liturgy and was able to interact with the students informally afterwards.

The Year 4 students participated in the Diocesan Religious Literacy Assessment task and the Year 5 and Year 6 students participated in the Sydney Catholic Education Office (CEO) and Wollongong CEO Christmas Story Art Competition and Exhibition.

Religious Literacy Assessment

The Religious Literacy Assessment Program for Year 4 students was successfully completed in schools across the Diocese in 2012. The school cohort in 2012 consisted of fifty-two Year 4 students who sat the Religious Literacy Assessment Workbook (Part A) on 28th August 2012 and fifty-three students completed the Extended Task (Part B). The Extended Task was based on the Unit: Mary, Mother of God: First Among the Saints and was completed during the first half of Term 3.

The performance of each student was described as developing, achieving or extending. Students showed a high level of performance in their knowledge of the religious tradition. This high level of performance was particularly noticeable in their:

- Understanding the symbols of Baptism;
- Ability to identify key symbols, signs and rituals of the Catholic Tradition;
- Ability to describe and explain an image of God from the Scriptures;
- Ability to identify and describe qualities of the saints;
- Ability to demonstrate an understanding of their place in creation;
- Understanding of the purpose of parables; and,
- Understanding of known prayers.

The school's results showed that:

- The children were above the Diocesan average in 19 out of the 27 questions;
- The children were within 5% of the Diocesan results in 4 out of the 27 questions; and,
- The children were only below the Diocesan results by 5% or more in 4 questions.

The students' responses showed a need for them to develop their capacity to work with, and apply the religious tradition, especially in their ability to:

- Demonstrate understanding of Jesus' teaching on forgiveness;
- Recall key aspects from the Story of Noah and the Ark;
- Identify and match items in the Church; and,
- Demonstrate knowledge of Biblical characters.

Students in Part B displayed improvements in their ability to work with and apply their religious knowledge.

For Part A, 10 % of students were placed in the developing level, 77 % in the achieving level and 13% were in the extending level.

For Part B, 0 % of students were placed in the developing level, 68 % in the achieving level and 32 % were in the extending level.

Combining Parts A and B, 4 % of students were placed in the developing level, 77 % in the achieving level and 19 % were in the extending level for Religious Literacy.

The relationship between the Diocesan overall results and the school results are as follows:

Overall combination of Part A and Part B:

DIOCESAN DISTRIBUTION

Developing 18.4%

Achieving 62.5%

Extending 19.1%

ST THOMAS MORE RESULTS

Developing 3.8%

Achieving 76.9%

Extending 19.2%

Financial Summary

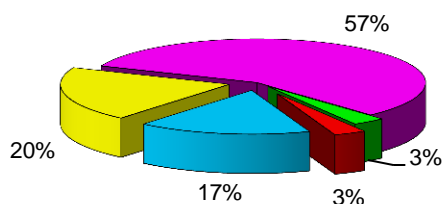
Financial administration and management procedures at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School were well documented, communicated and working well in practice. Budgets and financial records were set and managed by the School Leadership Team and Senior School Support Officer (SSSO). Effective liaison with the Administrative Services Team at the Catholic Education Office is maintained.

During 2012 normal school running costs were incurred. In addition, the St Thomas More Catholic Primary School underwent its annual building maintenance program, which was funded by the Parish School Enhancement Debt Servicing Obligation (SEDSO) fund. The cost of this program was \$10 499. The Parish SEDSO fund also funded other major works such as the resurfacing of the basketball/netball court (\$11 280), improvements to the access road to the school and school car park (\$35 000), the removal of trees (\$1 700), re-concreting of pathways (\$2 673), the installation of new lighting in classroom areas (\$47 651), roof repairs (\$1 100), installation of an archiving system (\$4 440), and the changing of locks throughout the school (\$2 200).

The P&F and Mothers' Club were also generous with their support throughout 2012. The funds provided by these two school community groups were used to purchase technology equipment, reading materials, subsidise student participation in the Life Education Program, support students participating at the elite level of sport and providing hospitality for the school community at several school functions held throughout the year. The balance carried forward represents outstanding accounts and orders for technology equipment to be installed at the beginning of the 2013 School Year.

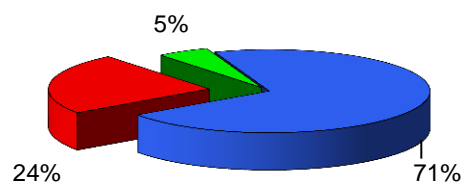
The following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, Ruse for the year ended 31 December 2012. This data is taken from the 2012 financial return to the Australian Government, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Income



- Fees and Other Private income
- State Government Funds
- Commonwealth Recurrent Grants
- Government Capital Grants
- Other Capital Income

Expenditure



- Salaries, Allowances and Related Costs
- Non Salary Expenses
- Capital Expenditure

Student Welfare

Introduction

Catholic Schools are based on the dignity of the whole person and provide witness to Gospel Values as a means to living out daily life. St Thomas More Catholic Primary School strives to be a place of belonging where all are treated with dignity and respect. These values are captured in the Diocesan and School's Pastoral Care Policy.

Pastoral Care

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School continued to provide valuable support to all members of the school community. The school continued to have access to the expertise of a Pastoral Support Person (PSP). The PSP has become an integral and active part of the school community and offers those members undergoing hardship and challenges, not only a listening ear and an understanding heart, but also practical help, advice and access to other associated support services. The PSP assisted in the facilitation of the Kindergarten Transition to School and Social Skills Program and has co-ordinated and facilitated the 'Seasons For Growth' grief and loss program within the school.

The promotion of positive relationships amongst all members of the community, especially among the students, is the touchstone of Catholic education. Throughout the year children have been encouraged to strive to be the best they can be. Their achievements in a number of different aspects of school life were recognised through a variety of awards. At our weekly Monday morning assembly, individual classroom achievements were celebrated and the

Student of the Week Award was presented. Nominations for this award were open to students, staff and parents. Names of students were identified from each Stage, to attend a monthly morning tea with the Principal. The recognition for exemplary behaviour on the playground was celebrated through the presentation of Achievement Cards, Canteen Rewards and Certificates. Stewardship Awards were presented to children at each grade assembly in recognition of the students who have used their time, talents or treasure for the good of the community.

The Peer Support Program in 2012 focused on 'Building Connections' among the students. The Year 5 and 6 students underwent Peer Support Leadership training, which enabled them to facilitate the weekly sessions during Term 3. The 'Better Buddy' program, designed to promote friendly and caring schools, also continued to be an integral program, focusing on building strong relationships between the Year 4 students and their Kindergarten buddies. The CatholicCare Counsellor continued to support the children and families three days per fortnight. The Counsellor assisted in supporting the social and emotional development of students at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School.

The Diocesan School Wide Positive Behaviour For Learning Program (SWPB₄L), now in its fourth year at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, continued to make a significant impact within the school. The focus for 2012 was to continue to embed SWPB₄L in the classroom through the use of teacher designed classroom behaviour matrixes and specifically taught classroom behavioural expectations, all of which were founded on the four school rules. The revision of procedures and the provision of streamlined methods for documenting and reporting student behaviour continued to be a focus for the members of the SWPB₄L team.

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Wollongong are committed to a safe and supportive environment. The principles, guidelines and procedures set out in the policy documents ***Maintaining Right Relationships*** and ***Safe Work Environment*** are the framework for school leaders, students, staff, parents and the wider community to develop a safe and supportive environment. The Diocesan ***Complaints Handling Procedures*** forms an important element in the Diocese's commitment to ensuring safe and supportive environments for school communities. These documents can be found on the Catholic Education Office website: www.dow.catholic.edu.au. No changes were made to these Diocesan documents in 2012.

In compliance with the ***NSW Reform Act 1990***, Corporal Punishment is banned in all schools within the Diocese of Wollongong.

Access to all policies and guidelines can be obtained by contacting the school office.

Learning and Teaching

Introduction

At St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, all Board of Studies requirements are being met as the school strives to implement a contemporary curriculum to meet the needs of all students. In addition to the Key Learning Areas prescribed by the NSW Board of Studies, the students have been provided with courses in Religious Education (RE) in accordance with Diocesan Policy. The Diocesan School Review and Improvement (SRI) process provided a focus for initiatives in learning and teaching in 2012. The components reviewed in 2012 that supported the delivery of quality learning and teaching included Reporting Student Achievement, Assessment, Professional Development of Staff and Innovation, Development and Change.

Curriculum & Pedagogy

During 2012 assessment data was used from the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) to give a focus, and guide the learning and teaching experiences of the teachers. The results of NAPLAN were analysed and discussed, and the setting of targets followed this in literacy and numeracy and the development of implementation strategies to assist in the achievement of these targets. The results indicated that spelling, punctuation and grammar were to be a focus. A basic scope and sequence for punctuation and grammar was developed. A consistent approach to the draft writing, proofreading and editing process was reinforced. The focus on number sense and problem solving in Mathematics continued to be a priority in 2012. The development of firm foundations of the concepts related to number and patterns and algebra was also stressed.

In 2011 St Thomas More explored methods to assist in the identification of students within our school at the high end of the learning continuum (gifted and talented) and to provide pathways of enrichment for these identified students. During 2012 a school-wide identification schedule was established to assess and identify students throughout the school. A Learning Communities Project titled 'Varied Paths for All' was implemented with the support of the Catholic Education Office, Wollongong and built upon the shared understandings developed during previous projects. It enabled staff to explore available methods and strategies to assist in the differentiation of learning for identified gifted and talented students within the classroom setting. The intent of the project was to provide a means for the school to offer enrichment options that support the implementation of long term individual education plans.

At St Thomas More Catholic Primary School the importance of learning technology as an effective tool for learning and teaching is greatly appreciated. In addition to a range of digital devices, Smart Board technology enhanced and assisted in the delivery of quality, engaging learning experiences. Technology in the form of iPads was introduced in 2012 and access will be gradually rolled out to all grades. The 'My Classes' portal was used by staff and children to

assist in the learning and teaching experience, however, this system is due to be superseded in 2013 by the Google suite of applications.

Assessment is an integral component of learning and teaching. It occurs as a natural part of the learning cycle, before, during and after teaching. A variety of assessment tasks were undertaken and the results were combined to provide teachers and students with a clear picture of progress. This information was communicated to parents using the Federal Government mandated A-E reporting system and three way Parent/Teacher/Student conferences. The children in Year 3 and Year 5 completed the NAPLAN tests. Children in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 were also given the opportunity to participate in the University of New South Wales, Mathematics, English, Computer and Science Competitions. The children in Year 4 also participated in the Wollongong Diocese Religious Literacy Assessment.

Cross Curriculum

Where possible, the learning and teaching programs were integrated across all Key Learning Areas and these were implemented in a variety of ways.

To encourage and increase the love of literature, all students were given the opportunity to participate in the 2012 Premier's Reading Challenge. In all, thirty-nine children completed the challenge in the required time allocation and four children were awarded the Gold Certificate for completing the challenge for four consecutive years.

The Grandparents Day celebration has become one of the major highlights on the school calendar. Held during Catholic School's Week in Term 2, the St Thomas More parents and grandparents had the opportunity to visit classrooms and share stories and experiences with the children. The day gave the students an insight into life in the 'old days' and was an opportunity to showcase work displayed in the respective classrooms. The purpose of Catholic School's Week was to increase public awareness of the strengths and distinctiveness of Catholic Schools and to act as a focus for community celebrations about the good things that occur every day in Catholic schools.

All classes had the opportunity to enhance their learning through excursions, and all classes attended Life Education workshops and visiting performances such as the 'Puppet Man'. Kindergarten visited Calmsley Hill City Farm. Year 1 enjoyed their day exploring the Freres Crossing Nature Reserve and the built parklands of Park Central. Year 2 experienced an incursion focusing on indigenous technology and visited the Campbelltown Art Gallery with Year 3, who also visited The Australian Museum. Year 4 enjoyed their excursion to 'The Rocks' and participated in the indigenous technology incursion. The Year 5 students enjoyed a three-day leadership camp to Wedderburn Christian Camp, and the Year 6 students participated in a three-day excursion to Canberra and the snowfields.

During Term 4, the Year 5 students once again participated in the 'Transition Project' which involved students visiting St Patrick's College and John Therry Catholic High School to engage in a number of learning and teaching experiences in Woodwork, Science, Mathematics, Visual

Arts and Food and Textiles. These experiences allowed our students to experience first-hand learning within High School context.

Indigenous perspectives were included within at least one unit of work in Human Society and Its Environment, with greater focus undertaken in this area in Year 3 and Year 6.

Meeting the needs of all students

Teachers at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School are committed to ensuring that all students' needs are met. In addressing the individual needs of students, a variety of individual support structures were provided. These include Peer Reading, Buddy Reading, School Support Officer Intervention and access to Reading Recovery and the Learning Support Centre. In 2012 the St Thomas More 'Intensive Reading Program' (IRS) continued to be a worthwhile means of support to those children in all stages that were experiencing difficulties in reading. The parent helper induction and training sessions assisted parents who volunteered their time to provide extra assistance in the classroom, to be better prepared in their role to engage with the learning of the students.

Those teachers, who had children with special education needs in their classes, implemented an Individual Plan (IP) to identify academic, social and emotional needs and to set achievable goals related to each area. Transition meetings were held in Terms 1 and 3 to inform parents of progress and to maintain communication between home and school. A transfer of information session was undertaken in Term 4 to assist the smooth transition of students from one academic year to the next.

Reading Recovery offered an intensive reading intervention to the students in Year 1. In 2012, eleven students accessed the program and all but three were successfully discontinued from Reading Recovery. The Reading Recovery Teacher also provided support in reading and writing to those children identified through the analysis of NAPLAN data in Years 3 and 5 and assisted with the tracking of past Reading Recovery students.

Students with specific learning needs continued to be supported at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School through the School Review Committee. The Committee comprised a selection of staff under the guidance of the Review Committee Manager. The staff met regularly to review students who were identified with specific needs, and strategies were put in place to assist both the child and teacher with learning and teaching.

The Best Start Program was implemented in Kindergarten. The information obtained through this assessment was used to inform the development of learning plans, and assisted in the identification of those children needing learning support in specific areas.

The St Thomas More Catholic Primary School Learning Support Centre caters for those children with an identified intellectual disability. The focus for the children is on developing their literacy, numeracy and social skills. The learning environment in the Learning Support Centre was enhanced by Smartboard technology and the use of educational apps on the

iPads. This resource has proven to be an exciting and challenging way to engage students in learning.

During Term 3, as part of St Thomas More Catholic Primary School's Learning Communities Project, six Stage 3 and five Stage 2 children were identified and given the opportunity to participate in the 'Stretching Potential Through Learning in Interactive Challenging Environments in the Diocese of Wollongong' (SPLICED). The online quest enabled students to research, present and be challenged in their learning. This initiative was well received and enjoyed by the participants.

Parents were invited to a number of workshops throughout the year designed to assist them to engage more effectively in their child's learning. School staff, as well as external experts, such as a Speech Therapist, Occupational Therapist and the CEO Gifted Education Officer, facilitated these workshops.

Expanding Learning Opportunities

Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) needs were well catered for through the weekly Physical Education lessons. All children participated in the School Cross Country Carnival. The Annual Athletics Carnival was held for the first time at the Campbelltown Stadium, which proved to be a magnificent venue for students to test their athletic capabilities. Selection trials were held, and children were chosen, to represent St Thomas More Catholic Primary School at the Western Region Athletics Carnival. Children from Year 3 to Year 6, and selected Year 2 children, participated in the Annual Swimming Carnival, which was held at Bradbury Swimming Centre. This Carnival was extremely successful because it focused on maximising student participation and enjoyment.

Staff also prepared children for participation in a number of Diocesan and local sporting events and Carnivals including cross country, cricket, athletics, netball, swimming, soccer, and rugby league. Senior and junior soccer teams at the Annual Tiger Shield Soccer Tournament represented the school. A number of St Thomas More Catholic Primary School students had the opportunity to represent at Diocesan, MacKillop, State and National level.

The 'Active Afternoon Program' continued to be a fun, well-attended and rewarding program at St Thomas More. This program, funded by the Federal Government, allowed children the opportunity to participate in free, fun, healthy, organised activities, which promote a healthy lifestyle.

Our school participated in the 'Live Life Well' program, which promoted the development of healthy lifestyles and nutrition among our students. As a result of this program, students participated in healthy food trials, lunchtime fitness and the establishment of the 'Up and Go' Breakfast Club.

Year 5 and Year 6 children had the opportunity to participate in the School Public Speaking Competition with two students being chosen to represent St Thomas More Catholic Primary School at the Annual Diocesan Regional Public Speaking Competition.

During 2012 the children had the opportunity to learn keyboard, guitar, singing or drums through the 'Music Bus' Program. This program has gained popularity among the children.

'The Christmas Story Art Competition and Exhibition 2012' organised by the Archdiocese of Sydney again allowed children in Stage 3 the opportunity to express and use their artistic talents. St Thomas More Catholic Primary School was successful in having a number of entries displayed in the exhibition at the Wollongong Art Gallery.

Each grade had two opportunities during the year to showcase their learning for the school community through the leading of school assemblies. These assemblies were a powerful means of sharing their learning with all members of the school community and were a highlight on the school calendar. Year 6 students initiated and organised the first ever 'St Thomas More's Got Talent Week' which supported students from across the school to showcase a multitude of talents. Successful finalists were chosen to perform at an end of year assembly for their peers and parents.

Student Achievement

The school uses a variety of assessment strategies at key points in the learning framework. These include teacher observation, projects and presentations. The school also participates in the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) for the purposes of diagnosing individual learning needs and reviewing whole class teaching programs. Information on student progress is communicated on a regular basis and external assessment results are discussed with parents on an individual basis, annually.

NAPLAN

The National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) assesses aspects of literacy and numeracy in Years 3 and 5. It provides valuable information about student achievements in literacy and numeracy. Analysis of the results is used at school level to support the enhancement of literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students.

In May 2012, the children in Year 3 and Year 5 sat the NAPLAN tests. There were fifty-eight Year 3 and forty-three Year 5 students who sat these assessments. Overall, the students displayed growth in areas of literacy and numeracy. The Year 3 cohort performed better in writing than reading and the Year 5 cohort performed better at reading than writing. Our school target focus has been on spelling, grammar and punctuation and significant learning gains have been reflected in the test results in these areas. Both Years 3 and 5 performed well, achieving more band 5 and 6 results than the National average in writing, spelling and grammar. In addition, the results show that the Year 5 students have shown learning gains above the expected growth in numeracy and the Year 5 boys have demonstrated scores

above the average state growth in reading. Year 5 boys have improved by forty-seven scale scores from the 2011 data in the test aspect of reading. Year 5 boys are 12 scale scores above the state average in the test aspect of reading. To continue this growth, the areas of reading and writing will be areas of focus throughout the school in 2013.

Student Achievement in Bands

Year 3 results are reported in Bands 1 to 6 with Band 6 representing the highest achievement and Year 5 results are reported in Bands 3 to 8 with Band 8 representing the highest achievement. **Please Note: Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.**

NAPLAN 2012: % in Bands		YEAR 3			YEAR 5		
		Bands 1 and 2	Bands 3 and 4	Bands 5 and 6	Bands 3 and 4	Bands 5 and 6	Bands 7 and 8
Reading	School	16%	49%	35%	20%	50%	30%
	National	14%	37%	47%	18%	49%	31%
Writing	School	4%	48%	48%	10%	85%	5%
	National	8%	44%	47%	18%	60%	19%
Spelling	School	7%	37%	56%	15%	63%	23%
	National	13%	41%	44%	17%	50%	32%
Grammar & Punctuation	School	15%	33%	52%	13%	65%	23%
	National	13%	36%	50%	20%	47%	31%
Numeracy	School	15%	60%	26%	10%	73%	18%
	National	16%	49%	33%	18%	53%	27%

Student Achievement of National Minimum Standard

Students are considered to be achieving BELOW the National Minimum Standard (NMS) if they are in the lowest Band for each year (Band 1 in Year 3 and Band 3 in Year 5) or if they have been exempt from NAPLAN. Students in the second Band for each year (Band 2 in Year 3 and Band 4 in Year 5) are achieving AT the NMS. Students in all other Bands are achieving ABOVE the NMS.

NAPLAN 2012: % AT or ABOVE NMS		YEAR 3	YEAR 5
Reading	School	95%	93%
	National	94%	92%
Writing	School	96%	95%
	National	95%	92%
Spelling	School	93%	91%
	National	94%	93%
Grammar & Punctuation	School	93%	93%
	National	93%	90%
Numeracy	School	97%	93%
	National	94%	93%

Parent, Student and Staff Satisfaction

Students, parents and staff were given the opportunity to provide the school with feedback in a number of key areas via an online survey. The student responses were overwhelmingly positive in all areas. The results indicated that the students were collectively proud to be members of the St Thomas More community. They wholeheartedly acknowledged the importance of the school in fostering their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith. Students indicated that they regard St Thomas More Catholic Primary School as a safe and supportive environment, where they were encouraged to learn to the best of their ability and where they were afforded a variety of opportunities in which they could become involved, both within the school and in the wider community.

The parent survey responses indicated that the school climate was faith centred founded on a clear mission and vision. Parents believed the school was supportive of parents and pupils who experience problems or had concerns and provided opportunities for members of the school community to provide input and to participate in school activities. Parents indicated that student progress and learning outcomes were monitored and assessed, and St Thomas More Catholic Primary School has a positive learning environment. The parents, however, indicated the need for the school to continue to explore methods of communicating information to parents regarding student progress.

Staff responses indicated that they believed that the school was supportive of parents and pupils experiencing problems or concerns. Staff members believed they were involved in supporting the mission of the School. The staff members also felt that the school provided appropriate support, resources and supervision for the implementation of learning and teaching within various Key Learning Areas, and that innovation was encouraged in the delivery of quality learning and teaching. The staff also believed that the school encouraged a positive environment for learning and that St Thomas More Catholic Primary School was well organised. The staff responses indicated that the school could continue to improve by

maintaining the focus on meeting the learning needs of individual students and by further challenging students to maximise their learning outcomes.

School Review and Improvement

School Review and Improvement is an on-going process of self-evaluation measured against a commonly agreed set of criteria. It informs action planning at the school level to identify areas of strength and areas for improvement. Above all, Catholic schools must be good schools with a strong learning orientation and a strong sense of purpose. In all aspects of improving and developing, schools should be learning-centred, constantly striving for excellence and have the student as their primary focus.

School Review and Improvement components reviewed and rated in 2012:

- **Key Area 1: Catholic Life and Religious Education**

- 1.4 Parents, Parishes and the broader Church

- Opportunities to forge closer links between the Parish and School communities have been established.

- **Key Area 2: Students and their Learning**

- 2.3 Reporting student achievement

- A new report format has been implemented in 2012 and as a result of consultation with parents; it has been adjusted in order to provide more meaningful information about their child's progress.

- **Key Area 3: Pedagogy**

- 3.5 Assessment

- Staff explored the use of standards to develop more effective assessment tasks and used opportunities to work with other members of staff to ensure the consistency of professional teacher judgement.

- **Key Area 4: Human Resources, Leadership and Management**

- 4.2 Professional development of staff

- A method of tracking the Professional Learning opportunities attended by staff has been implemented in order to monitor spending within the allocated budget. More formal opportunities for sharing professional learning have been provided.

- 4.5 Overall compliance with legislation and other requirements

- Relevant CEO and School Policies have been centralised using Shared Drives for more convenient access by staff.

- **Key Area 7: Strategic Leadership and Management**

- 7.1 Planning for improvement

The development of personal annual plans for all staff has helped to guide and embed the Professional Development Planning and Review (PDPR) process within the school.

7.2 Innovation, development and change

A whole school assessment schedule has been developed and implemented to identify Gifted and Talented (G&T) students within the school. Individual learning plans for all identified G&T students were developed by classroom teachers and included in learning and teaching programs. The development of a Draft School G&T policy has been completed. Parent workshops have been offered to assist parents to engage and support the learning of their child. Resources have been purchased to assist with extension and enrichment within mainstream classrooms.

School Review and Improvement components to be reviewed and rated in 2013:

- **Key Area 1: Catholic Life and Religious Education**

1.2 Religious Education

To use the Religious Education curriculum as the vehicle to revisit the backward design model of program planning and to assist in designing authentic assessment tasks that closely reflect the achievement of outcomes.

- **Key Area 2: Students and their Learning**

2.1 Educational Potential

To continue to explore strategies that will provide each student with opportunities to demonstrate their educational potential.

- **Key Area 3: Pedagogy**

3.2 Provision for the diverse needs of learners

3.3 Teaching Practices

3.5 Assessment

To build the professional pedagogical expertise of teachers to use the plan, deliver and assess effective learning plans, through the meaningful use of data obtained from school based, as well as external, assessments. This data will enhance and inform the learning and teaching process. Improved opportunities for differentiation would facilitate the need for more authentic ways for students to demonstrate their potential as learners.

To develop a whole-school approach to the use of data, to effectively inform the teaching and learning process, in order to continually improve whole school, cohort and individual student performance.

To use data analysis that is comprehensive and valid, and covers the range of school-based as well as external assessments.

- **Key Area 5: Resources, Finance and Facilities**

- 5.1 ICT Resources

To update the school ICT plan in order to effectively incorporate the management and implementation of iPad technology with existing technology resources.

