

***St Thomas More
Catholic Primary School
Ruse***



***Annual School Report
2011***

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 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 Annual Action Plan.

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 2012.

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: Mr Don Spencer

Date: 16 December 2011

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

As Principal of St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, I use it with pleasure that I present the Annual School Report for the 2011 School Year.

The year commenced with the official opening of the new school hall. This building has proved, in such a very short time, to be a valuable asset to the school community. The children and staff now have an excellent learning space, which will no doubt be used to enhance the learning for many years to come.

During the year, the staff members have continued in their endeavours to create a learning environment that meets the needs of all children. A major focus for the year was the work, which centred on a whole school understanding of and putting in to place, strategies to accommodate the 'Gifted and Talented' students who attend St Thomas More. This work will also be a focus in the 2012 school year.

The Annual School Report provides an opportunity for the community to reflect on, and celebrate, the significant achievements that have occurred throughout the 2011 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 this Catholic learning organisation.

Parent Involvement

The 2011 Parents and Friends (P&F) year has been the present P&F committee's most successful year to date. While rain put a stop to the carols night, the movie nights and school discos more than made up for the disappointment. The 2011 Fete was a great day as usual and was this committee's most financially successful, an excellent result despite a storm on the day. Thanks must go to the Fete Committee and Mothers' Club for continually doing such a great job. Their work is often in the background but very much appreciated. I would also like to thank the past families of St Thomas More for representing our school community and supporting Mater Dei School at their Spring Fair.

As this is my last year on the Committee I would like to acknowledge the hard work of all members of the committee over the last three years. I acknowledge the ongoing involvement and excellent relationship we've had with the Principal and the teaching staff, and the support and involvement of the school community. Together we've made a real difference to our school. Finally, I wish the incoming committee good health and lots of support in 2012 as they continue

to nurture our combined parent and school community.

Parents and Friends Association, President

Student Leadership

The 2011 School year was a very significant year for the students, staff and parents of St Thomas More. A most important occasion was the official blessing and opening of the new hall. Bishop Peter Ingham visited St Thomas More and the School Captains had the opportunity to escort the Bishop and other dignitaries whilst they carried out the blessing. Every Monday morning, Year 6 children had the opportunity to lead prayer and help hand out awards. As part of the leadership process in Year 6, the children formed teams, including the Student Newsletter Team, the Religious Education Team, the Environment Team and also the Events Team. These teams gave Year 6 an opportunity to understand how leaders act and what their responsibilities are. The School Captains attended many liturgies and ceremonies and represented the school at different events. One of the most important ceremonies attended was the ANZAC Day Service. The Captains participated in the event to pay respect to those who fought and died in the wars. During 2011 the Year 6 students also organised fundraisers for different charities. Money was raised for the missions as well as the Queensland flood appeal and Jeans for Genes Day.

We wish the school community all the best for the future.

School Leaders

School Profile

School Context

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School is a two stream Kindergarten (K) to Year 6 (K-6) systemic school, and has a current enrolment of 365 students. The school is under the direction of the Catholic Education Office, Wollongong. St Thomas More has benefited from a tradition enriched by the Sisters of the Good Samaritan as well as the Marist Brothers due to Principals and staff who have led and staffed the school in the past. 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 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 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 in children 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 technology. The students are able to access laptops, 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 is a school where students, staff, parents and pastor work and celebrate together in a spirit of true partnership.

Student Enrolments

2011	Boys	Girls	Total	Indigenous	LBOTE
	194	171	365	8	111

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 2011.

Student Attendance

2011	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
	90.1%	91.3%	88.6%	86.1%	89.8%	87.6%

Management of Student Non Attendance

The classroom teacher takes class attendance rolls each day and an office staff member enters the data into School Accounting System (SAS). It is a school expectation that if students are absent from school, then a written note explaining the absence is given to the child's class teacher, on return to school, which in turn is documented and archived by office staff. An email to the school explaining the absence is also acceptable. If a note or email is not received, an absent reminder note is sent to parents and it is expected to be returned. If two absent reminder notes are not returned then a "unexplained/ unjustified" absence is documented. In the event of a child having an excessive number of unexplained absences a phone call to parents by the Principal or representative is undertaken. If a child leaves school early they are issued with a pass, which indicates that the school is aware of their absence. If students are to be absent for an extended period of leave within the school term, parents/guardians are requested to notify the school of the duration of leave, prior to the leave being taken.

Staffing Profile

There are a total of 22 teachers and 9 support staff at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School. This number includes 18 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 2011 was 97.14%. This does not include planned leave such as maternity or long service leave. The teacher retention rate from 2010 to 2011 was 91%.

Professional Learning

During 2011, St Thomas More personnel undertook a range of professional learning activities related to improving student outcomes, particularly through School Review & Improvement (SRI) priorities.

These included:

St Thomas More whole school development days, which involved 31 staff for the Spirituality Day and 22 staff for the Australian Curriculum and Learning Communities Project development days. These days focused on:

- Australian Curriculum –teaching staff attended a Diocesan Development Day aimed at providing an insight into the Diocesan strategic approach to the implementation of the Australian Curriculum;
- Staff Spirituality – whole staff attended the first day of the Spirit Dream Conference at Homebush. This was an opportunity to reflect on the reality, affirm the strengths and name the issues concerning Catholic identity, faith formation and evangelisation in Catholic school communities; and
- Learning Communities Project titled ‘Potential Pathways’ – this project provided staff with the opportunity for professional dialogue, reading and learning in working towards developing a shared understanding of the gifted learner. It also enabled us to explore formal and informal methods available to assist in the identification of gifted and talented students at St Thomas More.

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

- A series of workshops developing an understanding of and improving classroom practices in components of the Literacy Block with emphasis on phonemic awareness (7 staff);
- Leadership Conferences including The University of Wollongong's Leadership Conference, Principal's Association Conference (2 staff);
- Beginning Teacher Professional Development (2 staff);
- Gifted Education (1 staff);
- School based Professional Development on Gifted Education, including within class support (17 staff);
- Opportunities to undertake personal spiritual formation (6 staff);
- Improving Pedagogy in Religious Education (2 staff);
- Religious Literacy Assessment (3 staff);
- Implementation of the new missal (1 staff member);
- Leadership training in order to assist the development of spirituality in the school context - Lamplighter's Program & Shining Lights (7 staff);
- Further education to upgrade Religious Education qualifications (2 staff);
- School Wide Positive Behaviours for Learning (SPB4L) Project, facilitation (6 staff);
- Physical Education, Health and Personal Development Network (5 staff);
- K-6 Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) Workshop (1 staff member);
- Leading Learning Technology (2 staff);
- Technology for Learning (1 staff member);
- Smart Board Technology Conference (5 staff);
- Training for the Implementation of Oliver (a Library resource program) (5 staff);
- Inquiry Pedagogy facilitated by Kath Murdoch (2 staff);
- Pedagogy for Dynamic Learning Environments (2 staff);
- Quality Learning Seminar, facilitated by David Langford (5 staff);
- Reading Recovery Training and Support (2 staff);
- School based professional development on supporting students with expressive or receptive language needs, including within class support (10 staff);
- Focus on Literacy and Numeracy (2 staff);
- Peer Support Training (1 staff member);
- Seasons for Growth Companion Training (2 staff);
- Let's Play Games – social support for students on the playground (2 staff);
- Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation Training (all staff); and
- School Accounting System training (2 staff).

The average expenditure by the school on Professional Learning per Staff member was \$511.

In addition, Professional Learning opportunities were provided by the Catholic Education Office with an additional average expenditure per staff member of \$898.

Catholic Life & Religious Education

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. The school continues to develop a strong relationship with the Parish community. The Parish Priest is very active in the school community, visiting each class at least once per term. Each Term the Parish Priest administers the Sacrament of Penance to Years 3-6 children. He also participated in class prayer liturgies in the new Prayer Room, offered reflections on the content covered in the Religious Education (RE) curriculum and celebrated Whole School Masses in the new Hall. In relation to this area, in 2011 all students travelled by bus to the Parish Church to celebrate with the Parish community. The school also organised weekend Parish Masses, which were led by St Thomas More 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' is continuing to be entrenched into the St Thomas More community. In this regard, the children participated in 'Stewardship Week' in which Morning Prayer and Religious Education (RE) lessons focused on the concept of stewardship. In 2011, 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. St Thomas More has a Stewardship Team, whose members are drawn from every class in the school. Their role is to promote social justice issues and assist with fundraising in the school, especially linking with St Vincent de Paul and Catholic Mission campaigns. Stewardship rewards were presented to students acknowledging students for their time, talents and treasures – the fundamental principles of Stewardship

A community highlight of the year for 2011 was the Catholic School's Week/Special People Mass. During this Mass, the grandparents and carers in the children's lives were acknowledged. The children shared morning tea with their grandparents then afterwards escorted their special visitors to view the work in their classrooms.

Prayer is an integral part of St Thomas More school life. Each day begins with school prayer being said during morning assembly. A prayer focus is evident in class RE lessons. Many memorable liturgies were celebrated during 2011 such as the Opening School Mass, Ash Wednesday, Holy Week Stations of the Cross, All Saints Day Mass and feast day celebrations such as the Feasts of St Thomas More, St Mary of the Cross and the Feast of the Annunciation. Bishop Peter Ingham and Mr Peter Turner – Director of Schools, officially opened the new School Hall. This liturgy recognised the many members of the community who helped establish the new Hall and the role of various community groups in the school.

In 2011 the students were involved in Social Justice Initiatives, including fundraising activities for St Vincent de Paul, Catholic Mission and Project Compassion. Guest speakers from Project

Compassion and Catholic Mission addressed the children. Approximately \$2,000 was donated to the worthy causes as well as many food hampers and Christmas presents.

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

The St Thomas More children are active participants in the Parish Sacramental Program. In 2011 each of the Sacramental Programs were supported by the religious lessons in the classrooms. The Religious Education Coordinator (REC) and other staff members liaised with the Parish Sacramental Team to ensure that Parish/School communication was maintained. The Sacrament of Penance was administered in Term 1. The Sacrament of the Eucharist was celebrated in Term 2 and the Sacrament of Confirmation in Term 3.

As part of the Religious Education Program the students in Year 6 participated in a Diocesan Liturgy with other Year 6 students from within the Macarthur region, at Mary Immaculate Parish, Eagle Vale. Bishop Peter Ingham led this liturgy.

The Year 4 students participated in the Diocesan Religious Literacy Assessment task and the Year 5 and Year 6 students participated in the Sydney CEO and Wollongong CEO Christmas Story. The Director of Schools, for his Christmas Story Art Prize, selected one of the student's artwork.

Religious Literacy Assessment

The Religious Literacy Assessment Program for Year 4 students was successfully completed within schools across the Diocese in 2011. The school cohort in 2011 consisted of thirty seven Year 4 students who sat the Religious Literacy Assessment Workbook (Part A) on 29th August 2011 and thirty seven 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:

- description and explanation of an image of God from the scriptures;
- understanding of Jesus' teaching on the practice of giving;
- understanding of the Emmaus story; and,
- recall and describing an experience of Jesus.

The school's results showed that:

- the children were above the Diocesan average in 17 out of the 29 questions;
- the children were within 5% of the Diocesan results in 9 out of the 29 questions; and,
- the children were only below the Diocesan results by 5% or more in 3 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:

- identify and match scripture to the liturgical season;
- recognise that they are made in God's image; and,
- recall the events of Pentecost.

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

For Part A, 13.5 % of students were placed in the developing level, 67 % in the achieving level and 18.9 % were in the extending level.

For Part B, 2.5 % of students were placed in the developing level, 78 % in the achieving level and 19.5 % were in the extending level.

Combining Parts A and B, 5.4 % of students were placed in the developing level, 81.1 % in the achieving level and 13.5 % 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:

DIOCESE	ST THOMAS MORE RESULTS
Developing 16.7%	Developing 5.4%
Achieving 63.5%	Achieving 81.1%
Extending 19.8%	Extending 13.5%

Financial Summary

Financial administration and management procedures at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School are well documented, communicated and working well in practice. Budgets and financial records are 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.

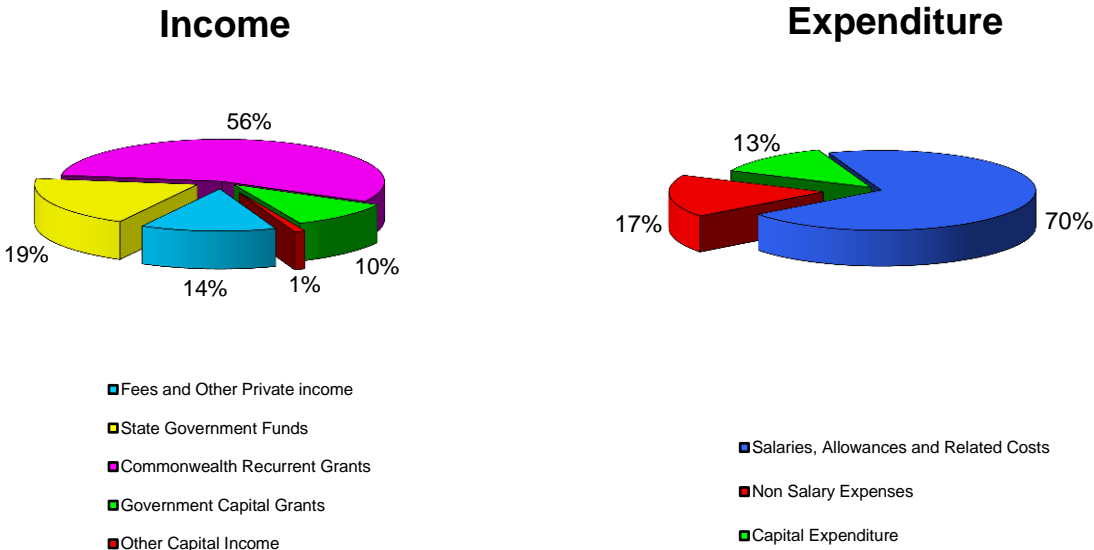
During 2011 normal school running costs were incurred. In addition, the St Thomas More Catholic Primary School underwent its annual building maintenance program, which was funded by the Parish School Enhancement Debt Servicing Obligation (SEDSO) fund. The cost of this program was \$9,852. The parish SEDSO fund also funded other major works such as the lining of pin boards to the classrooms (\$3638), the erecting of a wall in the big shed (\$1,705), relocating of audio visual equipment (\$2,630) and the installation of garden beds and retaining walls (\$1,474).

The P&F and Mothers' Club were also generous with their support throughout 2011. The funds provided by these two school community groups were used to purchase and install interactive

whiteboards, computers, reading materials, sporting ribbons and provide hospitality for the school community at several school functions held throughout the year.

The balance carried forward represents outstanding accounts and orders for the beginning of the 2012 School Year. Significant funds were required for additional finances to upgrade the lower basketball court and access road to the school, the installation of new lighting in classroom blocks and the final payments for the smart boards and associated refurbishments to classrooms and classroom furniture.

The following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, Ruse for the year ended 31 December 2011. This data is taken from the 2011 financial return to the Australian Government, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.



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 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. In 2011 a Pastoral Support Person (PSP) was appointed to the school by the Catholic Education Office Wollongong. The role offered the opportunity for the PSP to be an integral and active part of the school community by offering children and families a listening ear and an understanding heart by helping with challenging and sometimes difficult situations.

The PSP assisted in facilitating the Kindergarten Social Skills program, the 'Let's Play Games' social skills program for Stage 1, and also coordinated and facilitated the 'Seasons For Growth' grief and loss program.

Members of the school strived to promote positive relationships amongst all members of the community, especially the students. Throughout the year children were encouraged to do the best they could. Their achievements were recognised through a series of awards such as weekly individual awards, the Student of the Week Award, the opportunity to have morning tea with the Principal and recognition for exemplary behaviour on the playground by the presentation of Achievement Cards, Canteen Rewards and Certificates. Stewardship Awards were also presented to children at grade assemblies in recognition of them using their time, talents and treasure.

The Peer Support Program in 2011 focused on anti bullying. The Year 6 children underwent Peer Support Leadership training, which enabled them to facilitate the weekly sessions during Term 3. The 'Better Buddy Bears' program, designed to promote friendly and caring schools, also continued to be an integral program, focusing on building strong relationships between the Year 5 and K children.

The CatholicCare Counsellor continued to support the children and families on three days per fortnight. The Counsellor assisted in supporting the social and emotional development of students at St Thomas More. The Diocesan SPB4L Program, now in its third year at St Thomas More, continued to take on a significant role in the school. The focus for 2011 was to move into the 'In classroom' settings where teachers designed a class behaviour matrix, displayed and communicated the matrix to parents and specifically taught the classroom behavioural expectations. Much work was also carried out by staff, in revising and implementing the classroom and playground behaviour reflection sheets.

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 2011.

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 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 2011. The components reviewed in 2011 included Educational Potential, Curriculum Provision, Planning, Programming and Evaluation.

Curriculum & Pedagogy

During 2011 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, then targets and strategies in literacy and numeracy were developed and implemented. The results indicated that spelling was to be a focus. A basic scope and sequence for spelling and spelling choices was developed. It was also expected that teachers use a consistent approach to the draft writing, proofreading and editing process. The focus on number sense and problem solving in Mathematics continued to be a priority in 2011.

Analysis of NAPLAN, University NSW Competitions and other school data information indicated that the needs of the children in lower bands are being supported, however, supporting the needs of those children in the upper bands are not as successful. During 2011 it was the intention of the school to establish a process to develop criteria to assist in the identification of students at the high end of the learning continuum (gifted and talented) and then provide pathways of enrichment for the identified students. A Learning Communities Project titled 'Potential Pathways' was initiated with the support of the Catholic Education Office Wollongong. The project focused on the area of Mathematics/numeracy. It was the intent of the project 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 the importance of learning technology as an effective tool for learning and teaching is appreciated. All children and staff have access to laptop technology and the use of digital cameras and video cameras. I-pod touch technology was also a much-used resource in the Learning Centre. Smart Board technology was available to all classes and enhanced the quality-learning environment. The 'My Classes' portal continues to be used by staff and children to assist in the learning and teaching framework.

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: written, oral, performance and observation. A number of assessment tasks combine to provide teachers and students with a clear picture of progress which 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 Year 4, 5

and 6 were also given the opportunity to participate in the University of New South Wales, Mathematics, English, Computer and Science Tests. The children in Year 4 also participated in the Wollongong Diocese Religious Literacy Assessment.

Cross Curriculum

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

To encourage and increase the love of literature, all students were given the opportunity to participate in the 2011 Premier's Reading Challenge. In all, forty-seven children completed the challenge in the required time allocation and five children were awarded the Gold Certificate for completing the challenge for five 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 join in activities with the children. The day gave the students the opportunity to showcase the marvellous work being carried out in the respective classrooms. The purpose of Catholic School's Week is 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 took the opportunity to enhance learning through excursions, and all classes attended visiting performances such as the 'Puppet Man' and associated workshops. Kindergarten visited Calmsley City Farm, Year 1 enjoyed their day at the Powerhouse Discovery Centre, Year 2 experienced a day at the Macarthur Centre for Sustainable Living, Year 3 visited Featherdale Wildlife Park and Year 4 enjoyed their excursion to 'The Rocks'. The Year 5 children enjoyed a three-day camp to Wedderburn Christian Camp and the Year 6 children were fabulous ambassadors of St Thomas More when they went away on their three-day excursion to Canberra and the snowfields.

During Term 4, the Year 5 students once again participated in a program called 'Transition Project'. The students visited John Therry Catholic High School every Tuesday for six weeks to engage in a number of learning and teaching experiences in Woodwork, Science, Visual Arts and Food and Textiles. The experience also allows the students to get a small taste of a High School learning environment.

Indigenous perspectives are 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. During 2011 St Thomas More School was fortunate to have, on several occasions, the services of an Indigenous Education Support Officer. The Support Officer assisted classes and Indigenous students to create art works, which portrayed indigenous culture.

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School continues to develop links with St Patrick's College. The children in Year 3 engaged in a series of Physical Education lessons facilitated by the St Patrick's Year 9 Sports Science students and the St Thomas More Year 5 students participated in a Creative Arts Expo at the College.

Meeting the needs of all students

Teachers at St Thomas More 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 included peer reading, school assistant intervention and Reading Recovery. In 2011 the St Thomas More 'Intensive Reading Program' (IRS) was initiated and proved to be a worthwhile means of support to those children in Stage 2 and 3 who were experiencing difficulties in reading.

Teachers who had children with special education needs in their classes, implemented an Individual Plan (IP) to identify academic, social and emotional needs and set respective achievable goals. Transition meetings were held in Terms 1 and 3 to inform parents of progress and to maintain communication between home and school.

The Reading Recovery Program offered an intensive reading program to the students in Year 1. In 2011, 19 students accessed the program and all 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.

Students with specific learning needs continued to be supported at St Thomas More 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 their learning and teaching.

The Diocesan Early Literacy Assessment Program (ELA) was implemented in K and Year 1 with information obtained through this assessment being used to inform teachers and to assist in the identification of those children needing learning support.

The St Thomas More Learning Centre, which caters for those children with an identified intellectual disability, had another highly successful year. The focus for the children is on developing their literacy, numeracy and social skills. The learning environment in the Learning Centre was enhanced with the introduction of Smart Board technology, a resource which all children found exciting, fun and challenging.

During Term 3, as part of St Thomas More Primary School's Learning Communities Project, 6 children were identified and given the opportunity to participate in the 'Stretching Potential Through Learning in Interactive Challenging Environments in The Diocese of Wollongong' (SLPICED). The online quest enabled students to research, present and be challenged in their learning about tigers. This initiative was well received and enjoyed by the participants.

Expanding Learning Opportunities

Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PE) needs are well catered for through the weekly PE and Sport lessons. All children participated in the School Cross Country Carnival. Unfortunately, due to inclement weather, the Annual Athletics Carnival was cancelled. Selection trials were held and children were chosen to represent St Thomas More 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 Macquarie Fields Swimming Centre. This was

the first time this venue was used and the consensus from staff, children and parents was that this venue should be used for future Carnivals, due to the fact that the additional outside pool allows for more activities and greater participation of the children.

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. The school was represented by Senior and Junior Soccer Teams at the Annual Tiger Shield Soccer Tournament. A number of students represented St Thomas More at Diocesan and MacKillop Trials with three children being chosen to represent MacKillop. Stage 3 girls were again given the opportunity to attend a Netball Clinic facilitated by many of the current Australian and New South Wales Netball representatives.

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

Year 5 and Year 6 children had the opportunity to trial for, and participate in, the Diocesan Public Speaking Competition. During 2011 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 2011' organised by the Archdiocese of Sydney again allowed children in Stage 3 the opportunity to express and use their artistic talents. St Thomas More was successful in having one of its entries chosen for the final exhibition in the crypt at St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney. The Wollongong Diocese also acknowledged the entry. The artwork was chosen by the Diocese Director of Education to be used on the Director's 2011 Christmas card.

A highlight of the 2011 School Year was the performance of the St Thomas More Wakakirri Dance Troupe. The 102 children, representing classes from K to Year 6, spent many hours rehearsing and perfecting their performance. The children, staff and parents enjoyed the highly commended performance and experience.

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 NAPLAN was introduced for students in Year 3 and Year 5, in May 2008. It replaced the previous State-based Basic Skills Test and the results provide 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 2011, the children in Year 3 and Year 5 sat the NAPLAN tests. There were 55 Year 3 and 42 Year 5 students who sat these assessments. Overall, the students performed better in literacy than numeracy. Both the Year 3 and Year 5 cohort performed better in writing than reading. Although improvement in the test aspect of grammar and punctuation was reflected in the results of the Year 3 students, in comparison to the 2010 data, the areas of spelling, grammar and punctuation will continue to be areas of focus in 2012. In addition, the results show that the Year 3 girls are above the state average in the test aspect of numeracy and that the Year 5 boys have demonstrated above average in the state growth in their scores in reading compared to their results in the assessment in 2009.

Student Achievement in Bands

The National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) assess aspects of literacy and numeracy in Year 3 and Year 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. 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 2011: % 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	7%	60%	33%	22%	57%	21%
	National	15%	39%	45%	21%	49%	29%
Writing	School	2%	29%	69%	15%	69%	16%
	National	8%	44%	46%	18%	57%	23%
Spelling	School	4%	40%	57%	24%	55%	21%
	National	15%	42%	41%	20%	53%	26%
Grammar & Punctuation	School	4%	52%	44%	22%	57%	21%
	National	14%	36%	48%	17%	46%	35%
Numeracy	School	0%	66%	35%	26%	66%	7%
	National	14%	51%	33%	17%	56%	25%

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) represent students who are achieving AT the NMS. Students in all other Bands are achieving ABOVE the NMS.

NAPLAN 2011: % AT or ABOVE NMS		YEAR 3	YEAR 5
Reading	School	96%	84%
	National	94%	92%
Writing	School	95%	89%
	National	95%	92%
Spelling	School	95%	84%
	National	93%	91%
Grammar & Punctuation	School	95%	89%
	National	93%	92%
Numeracy	School	96%	91%
	National	96%	94%

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. Parents and staff were surveyed as part of the Principal's appraisal process and the students were surveyed during Term 4, 2011. 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 as a safe and supportive environment, where they are encouraged to learn to the best of their ability and where they are afforded a variety of opportunities in which they can become involved, both within the school and in the wider community.

The Parent's survey responses indicated that the school climate is faith centred and has a clear mission and vision. Parents believe the school supports parents and pupils with problems or concerns and the school provides opportunities for members of the school community to provide input and to participate in school activities. Parents indicated that student progress and learning outcomes are monitored and assessed, and St Thomas More has a positive learning environment. The parents did, however, believe the school could involve the broader community more in its planning process.

Staff responses indicated that the school provides opportunities for the personal and professional development of staff. They also believed that the school supports parents and pupils with problems or concerns. Staff members believe they are involved in supporting the mission of the School. The staff members also feels that the school provides appropriate support, resources and supervision for the implementation of learning and teaching within various Key Learning Areas, and that innovation is encouraged in the delivery of quality learning and teaching. The staff also believes that the school encourages a positive environment for learning and that St Thomas More is well organised. The staff response indicated that the school could improve building relationships and communication amongst staff.

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 2011:

- **Key Area 1: Catholic Life and Religious Education**
 - 1.1 Vision and Mission
- **Key Area 2: Students and their Learning**
 - 2.1 Educational Potential
- **Key Area 3: Pedagogy**
 - 3.1 Curriculum Provision
 - 3.4 Planning, Programming and Evaluation
- **Key Area 4: Human Resources, Leadership and Management**
 - 4.1 Recruitment, Selection and Retention of Staff
 - 4.3 An Ethical Workplace Culture
- **Key Area 6: Parents, Partnership, Consultation and Communication**
 - 6.2 Reporting to the Community

School Review and Improvement components to be reviewed and rated in 2012:

- **Key Area 1: Catholic Life and Religious Education**
 - 1.4 Parents, parishes and the broader Church
- **Key Area 2: Students and their Learning**
 - 2.3 Reporting student achievement
- **Key Area 3: Pedagogy**
 - 3.5 Assessment
- **Key Area 4: Human Resources, Leadership and Management**
 - 4.2 Professional Development of staff
 - 4.5 Overall compliance with legislation and other requirements
- **Key Area 7: Strategic Leadership and Management**
 - 7.1 Planning for improvement
 - 7.2 Innovation, development and change

