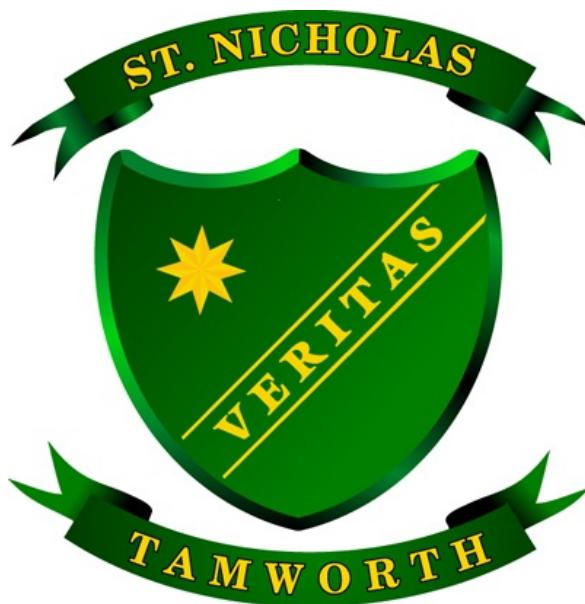


St Nicholas' Primary TAMWORTH

Annual School Report to the Community

2014



School Contact Details

PO Box 394, TAMWORTH 2340

principal@stnicholastamworth.catholic.edu.au

<http://www.stnicholastamworth.catholic.edu.au>

02 6766 1462

Principal

Mr Stefan van Aanholt

ABOUT THIS REPORT

St Nicholas' Primary is registered by the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW. The Catholic Schools Office, Armidale the 'approved authority' for the Registration System formed under Section 39 of the Education Act 1990 (NSW).

The *Annual School Report to the Community* provides parents and the wider 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 about initiatives and developments of major interest and importance during the year and the achievements arising from the implementation of the School's Annual Improvement Plan.

The *Report* demonstrates accountability to regulatory bodies, the School community and the Catholic Schools Office, Armidale. This *Report* has been approved by the Catholic Schools Office, Armidale in consultation with the Regional Consultant who monitors that the School has appropriate processes in place to ensure compliance with all Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards, NSW requirements for Registration and Accreditation.

This *Report* complements and is supplementary to School newsletters and other regular communications. Further information about the School may be obtained by contacting the School or by visiting the School's website.

SECTION ONE: MESSAGE FROM KEY GROUPS IN OUR COMMUNITY

Principal's Message

As a community of Faith, the students of St Nicholas School experience Catholic Education, Catholic worship and personal spiritual reflection in a creative, dynamic and vibrant way. St Nicholas School joins with parents and parish to spread the Good News of God's Kingdom. Our motto *Veritas* encourages all to seek the truth in all walks of life, "you will know the truth and the truth will set you free" Jn 8:32

This year saw the closure of our St Mary's Campus that has been part of the school since 1999. All students at the campus were offered places at the Carthage Street campus for 2015.

A very important aspect of life at St Nicholas is the involvement of our parents. We encourage parents to become as involved as possible in their child's education and we use a variety of methods to communicate with them.

Our "Manners Matter" initiative ensures that students are encouraged and reminded on a regular basis to display behaviour that is polite and courteous. Manners are a crucial thread intentionally woven into the fabric of St Nicholas.

I thank all members of our school community, staff, parents and the parish community for their commitment to the school in 2014.

Parent Body Message

St Nicholas parents have once again shown what an asset they are to our school community. Over \$25 000 was raised at the Spring Fair with much of the proceeds coming from parents through sponsorship and purchases on the day. St Nicholas parents are heavily involved in all aspects of school life, both at school and for extra curricula activities. Their representation on the School Board has provided independent, objective advice to the school executive in financial management, policy development and other aspects of school life. This was particularly evident this year with the Board being heavily involved with the decision to recommend to the Bishop the closure of the St Mary's Campus. I have been very proud to Chair the School Board this year.

Student Body Message

This year being School Captains was fun, exciting and exhilarating. We attended many public services and special events such as ANZAC Day, Remembrance Day and the Spirit of Catholic Education Bishop's Awards and Mass. We greeted many important special guests to our school including, Dr Stephen Brown, Bishop Michael Kennedy and Mr Barnaby Joyce. We ran the School Assemblies at which we led; the school prayer, Acknowledgement of Country and the National Anthem. We also handed out awards and certificates. We enjoyed being role models for the younger children and also developing confidence to meet new people and to improve our public speaking.

All school leaders attended the Halogen Foundation Leadership Day in Sydney and all Year 6 students attended a leadership day at school. The school Student Representative Council sees students from Year 2 to Year 6 represent their class.

We had a great year as Captains and leave you with our final message, "Manners Matter at St Nicholas".

SECTION TWO: SCHOOL FEATURES

St Nicholas' Primary is a Catholic systemic Co-educational School located in TAMWORTH.

Students attending St Nicholas come from a variety of backgrounds. There has been steady growth in enrolment over the past five years. An additional kindergarten class was formed in 2013 and 2014. An additional Year 6 class will be created in 2014 to accommodate the students who are moving from the St Mary's Campus.

To assist the classroom teacher and student learning, the school has a number of support staff including two Learning Enhancement Project officers, Educational Assistants, MiniLit and MultiLit para-professionals; Teacher Librarian, ICT Assistant and a specialist gymnastics teacher.

Students have the opportunity to participate in a number of extra-curricular activities including lunch clubs (dance, lego, gardening and chess), Tournament of Minds, public speaking, ukulele, piano, debating, eisteddfod and choir. Every second year, our senior students in Years 5 and 6 participate in the local catholic schools spectacular, Catholic Schools Celebrate.

Parents are always welcome to become involved at St Nicholas School and are instrumental in creating a culture of community. Parents are provided with numerous opportunities to be part of our school environment including: volunteering in our Friar's Tuckshop, supporting teaching and learning in the classroom, as guest speakers, fundraising events including our annual Spring Fair and Cocktail Evening; assisting at sporting events, School Masses and liturgical celebrations, Father's Day breakfasts and many more. A successful program at the school has been our Parent Reading workshop where parents are taught how to help their children read in support of the school's program and strategies.

Each January our school site accommodates a number of visitors in Tamworth for the annual Country Music Festival and this provides our school with funds to provide extra resources for our school and its staff and students.

Effective communication with parents is maintained through weekly newsletters both a paper copy and electronically, Keep In Touch books, email and an interactive website that includes pinterest and you tube, regular parent meetings and Yearly and Half Yearly Reports.

SECTION THREE: STUDENT PROFILE

Student Enrolment

The School caters for students in Kindergarten to Year 6. Students attending this School come from a variety of backgrounds. The following information describes the student profile for 2014:

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Total Students
245	239	15	484

* Language Background Other than English

Enrolment Policy

The Diocese of Armidale adheres to the policy as endorsed by the Bishops Commission for Catholic Schools 'Enrolment of Students in the Catholic Systemic Schools of the Diocese of Armidale'. The Catholic Schools Office Armidale monitors the implementation of this policy. The policy has been developed in the context of government and system requirements. Children from families who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church may be considered eligible for enrolment. A pastoral approach is adopted for parents experiencing genuine difficulty with the payment of fees.

The full text of the 'Enrolment of Students in Catholic Systemic Schools of the Diocese of Armidale', along with any specific enrolment policy for the school, is printed at the end of this document.

Student Attendance Rates

The average student attendance rate for 2014 was 94.61%. Attendance rates disaggregated by Year group are shown in the following table.

Attendance rates by Year group	
Kindergarten	95.24%
Year 1	93.67%
Year 2	94.68%
Year 3	94.33%
Year 4	94.42%
Year 5	95.11%
Year 6	94.84%

Managing Student Non-Attendance

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. The School, in partnership with parents, is 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.

School staff, under the Principal's leadership, support the regular attendance of students by:

- providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the School community;
- maintaining accurate records of student attendance;
- recognising and rewarding excellent and improved student attendance;
- implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise.

The Principal is responsible for supporting the regular attendance of students by ensuring that:

- parents and students are regularly informed of attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance;
- all cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies are implemented;
- documented plans are developed to address the needs of students whose attendance is identified as being of concern;
- the Director of Catholic Schools or designated Catholic Schools Office Armidale officer is provided with regular information about students for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue and for whom School strategies have failed to restore regular attendance.

SECTION FOUR: STAFFING PROFILE

The following information describes the staffing profile for 2014:

Total Teaching Staff*	Total Non-Teaching Staff	Combined Total
24	13	37

* This number includes 15 full-time teachers and 9 part-time teachers.

Percentage of staff who are Indigenous	3%
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Professional Learning

The ongoing professional development of each staff member is highly valued. Professional learning can take many forms including whole school staff days, subject specific in services, meetings and conferences and a range of professional learning programs provided by the Catholic Schools Office Armidale. The School takes responsibility for planning, implementing, evaluating and tracking of its staff professional learning and individual staff members take responsibility for their ongoing professional development. All teachers have been involved in professional learning opportunities during the year related to improving student outcomes.

The School held the equivalent of five staff developments days this year with areas of focus as follows:

Term 1	Focus on Lent/Non Crisis Intervention.
Term 2	No Staff Development Day
Term 3	Cardio Pulmonary Resusitation / John Hattie Research analysis/Anita Chin Mathematics Workshop/ A-E Reporting with NSW BOSTES Liaison Officer
Term 4	Developing Creative Classrooms/The Introduction of the new Mathematics and Science and Technology curriculum

St Nicholas is committed to keeping abreast of educational trends and best practice. Professional Development included; Non Crisis Intervention, instruction and implementation of the English syllabus as well as training for the implementation in 2015 of the new Mathematics and Science and Technology syllabi, Catholic Values and the new English syllabus, Anita Chin online Mathematics modules, reading strategies for Minilit, SMART data analysis, CPR, Asthma, Diabetes and Anaphylaxis training, Cyber Safety, a BOSTES Liaison Officer addressing staff meetings and various internal staff development

Teacher Standards

The following table sets out the number of teachers who fall into each of the categories determined by the Board of Studies:

Teacher Qualifications		Number of Teachers
1	Those having formal qualifications from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	23
2	Those having graduate qualifications but not a formal teaching qualification from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	1

SECTION FIVE: CATHOLIC LIFE AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

School follows the Armidale Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum and uses the student text *To Know, Worship and Love*, as authorised by the Bishop of Armidale, Michael Kennedy.

With the support of the Parish Priest there were two whole school Masses celebrated each term. The school also celebrated four feast days and special events. These included the Opening School Mass, the feast of St Joachim and Anne for Grandparent's Day, St Nicholas' Day and Ash Wednesday. There were regular Masses celebrated during school term for Stage Two and Stage Three students. Each term there was an Infant's Liturgy. St Mary's Campus also celebrated Mass at Nazareth House, Holy Family Chapel once a term. All parents, friends and families were invited to attend paraliturgies and Masses and parents from the Parish participated in various ministry roles e.g. Eucharistic Ministry. Families were also invited to Family Mass days on the first Sunday of the month at St Nicholas Parish and these were well attended. Various sacramental groups also provided morning tea after a Parish Mass.

Twenty one children participated in altar server training and are now regular altar servers at weekend masses. Daily prayer time continued for staff and students throughout the year with school leaders also leading the school community in prayer at assemblies. Sacramental programs were carried out with students, preparing for and making their Confirmation, preparing for and receiving First Holy Communion and making their First Reconciliation.

Parents and other family members participated through meetings and home programs. The Sacrament of Confirmation was supported with a retreat that was attended by Bishop Michael Kennedy, teachers and the candidates. All primary classes attended Reconciliation once a term and Infants classes attended a paraliturgy once a term. As part of the prayer life of the school the Rosary was prayed during the month of October and prayer cards were continued to be used at school events and gatherings. Staff also attended First Friday Mass each month during the year and participated in the 40 Families for 40 days initiative.

Students in Years 6 in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Armidale undertake the Diocesan Religious Education (RE) Test annually. The test consists of fifty multiple-choice questions. Results of the test are analysed by teachers and are used to inform teaching and learning in Religious Education.

SECTION SIX: CURRICULUM

The school provides an educational program based on, and taught in accordance with the Board of Studies, Teacher and Educational Standards, NSW syllabuses for Primary Education. The Key Learning Areas (KLAs) are English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Human Society and its Environment, Creative Arts and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education. In addition, the school implements the curriculum requirements of the Catholic Schools Office Armidale.

St Nicholas Primary School follows the New South Wales Board of Studies syllabus for each subject offered as required by the Education Act 1990. and implements the curriculum requirements of the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Armidale.

During 2014 the focus on quality teaching and learning centered on a new pedagogical framework, based on the research of John Hattie and others, was implemented at the school called the LIFT (Learning Is Forever Together) Program. The 3 key acronyms which form the core of the program are WALT (We Are Learning To), WILL (What It Looks Like) and WILT (What I Learnt Today).

Teachers worked collaboratively throughout the year to assess, plan and reflect on the teaching and learning as well as the introduction of the 'new' English syllabus.

The school uses data to inform all of its practice. Data includes results from SENA, PM Reading Benchmarks, NAPLAN, PAT Testing, Year 6 state wide Religious Education Test, student attendance, AEDI and A-E Reporting. Infants students who were identified as requiring additional support in literacy were placed in the MiniLit (Meeting Initial Needs in Literacy) Program devised by Macquarie University.

The school has advanced the use of technology in the classroom this year with all students having access to interactive technology including ipads and SMARTBOARDS as well electronic books and laptop computers. All infants classes are fitted with Redcat sound systems to amplify and clarify language in the classroom.

A range of curricula and extra curricula activities was available for students to discover and develop their individual talents. These included:

- Various Excursions both locally and intrastate
- Tournament of the Minds
- Debating and Public Speaking
- Brain Olympia

- Catholic Schools Celebrate
- Opportunities for students to have tuition in guitar and piano
- Various lunch clubs such as lego, chess, ipad and dance
- Individual Plans for students experiencing difficulty
- Eisteddfod performances
- Spelling Bees

SECTION SEVEN: STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN STATE-WIDE TESTS AND EXAMINATIONS

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an annual assessment for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. NAPLAN assessment results provide valuable information about student achievements in literacy and numeracy. An analysis of these results assists School planning and is used to support teaching and learning programs.

The tables below show the percentages of students who achieved particular skill bands in numeracy and the aspects of literacy. The School results shown are compared to students nationally. Literacy is reported in four content strands (aspects): Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation. Numeracy is reported as a single content strand.

NAPLAN RESULTS 2014		% of students in the top 2 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	Australia	School	Australia
Year 3	Reading	62.00%	46.20%	6.00%	13.10%
	Writing	48.00%	39.10%	6.00%	11.20%
	Spelling	43.00%	43.70%	14.00%	14.80%
	Grammar	59.00%	49.90%	6.00%	11.90%
	Numeracy	43.00%	36.20%	13.00%	13.40%

NAPLAN RESULTS 2014		% of students in the top 2 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	Australia	School	Australia
Year 5	Reading	51.00%	34.50%	7.00%	16.30%
	Writing	30.00%	15.50%	9.00%	21.40%
	Spelling	46.00%	33.60%	7.00%	16.40%
	Grammar	54.00%	36.60%	7.00%	16.10%
	Numeracy	22.00%	25.90%	13.00%	18.10%

SECTION EIGHT: PASTORAL CARE AND WELLBEING

Student Welfare Policy

St Nicholas Primary School seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment which:

- minimises risk of harm and ensures students feel secure
- supports the physical, social, academic, spiritual and emotional development of children
- has in place student welfare policies and programs that develop a sense of self worth and foster personal development.

The school's Pastoral Care Policy is based on the Bishop's Commission Policy Pastoral Care in The Catholic Systemic Schools of the Armidale Diocese.

The full text of school and diocesan policies are available from the School office.

The full text of the School's Pastoral Care Policy may be accessed on the School's website or at the administration office.

Discipline Policy

Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited in this School. The School does not sanction administration of corporal punishment by School persons and non-School persons, including parents, to enforce discipline in the School.

St Nicholas Primary School bases its Discipline Policy on the Bishop's Commission Policies Pastoral care in The Catholic Systemic Schools of the Armidale Diocese, Policy on Suspension, Expulsion or Exclusion of Students. These policies are based on procedural fairness and are discussed with students on a regular basis. The school's Discipline Policy is contained within the school's Pastoral care Policy.

The full text of the School's Student Discipline Policy may be accessed on the School's website or at the administration office.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The Catholic Schools Office, Armidale has established a *Student Anti-Bullying Policy* which is implemented by our school and all systemic schools in the Diocese. It provides a framework for school communities to work together to prevent and address issues of student bullying, in order to build respectful relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each person. The Catholic Schools Office (CSO) monitors the implementation of this policy. No changes were made to the policy this year.

The full text of the *Anti-Bullying Policy* may be accessed on the School's website, the administration office or at the CSO website.

Complaints and Grievances Resolution Policy

The Diocese of Armidale has established a *Staff Grievance Policy* which is implemented by our school in the Diocese. Each school also has an individual Grievance Policy and Procedure for dealing with matters at a school level. The rationale for these policies is that within the reality of the schooling experience, it is recognised that, from time to time, misunderstandings and differences of opinion will occur, and that these need to be resolved satisfactorily. Addressing such matters within a framework of dignity, respect and truth can provide powerful opportunities to model the love of Christ in the reality of our contemporary world. The Catholic Schools Office monitors the implementation of these policy. No changes were made to the policy this year.

The full text of the individual policies may be accessed on the School's website, the administration office or at the CSO website.

Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

At St Nicholas School we regard good manners as showing respect for other people but it also shows how we have respect for our own good standards and behaviour.

Manners are a habit and so become part of the makeup of the school. They are a thread intentionally woven throughout the fabric of St Nicholas School.

Our 'Manners Matter' initiative ensures that students are encouraged and reminded on a regular basis to display behaviour that is polite and courteous.

- ... standing up to let an adult or elderly person sit down.
- ... looking a person in the eye when you shake hands.
- ... saying 'excuse me' when you walk in front of someone.
- ... addressing people by name.
- ... saying "please" and "thank you".
- ... being patient and selfless - letting someone go in front of you or picking up something for another person.
- ... holding a door open for another person and saying thank you to another person when they hold a door open for you.

These are just a few of 'life's little lessons', but they are taught and modelled each day by teachers and students

Each year, the School develops an Annual Improvement Plan indicating the intended key improvements for student learning outcomes. The plan is drawn from the School's Strategic Improvement Plan and informed by the document *Diocesan Intents and Directions 2012-2014*. The School engages in an annual evidence-based evaluation of its effectiveness against these external standards in collaboration with the Schools Consultant.

Key Improvements Achieved in 2014

Key Improvements achieved in 2014 included:

- The implementation of the LIFT Program. This is a pedagogical framework based around the concept that the learning must be visible for each student. They must know what mastery and success looks like.
- A focus on the spiritual formation of staff
- The introduction of a School House program that incorporates sporting, academic and cultural opportunities for students.
- The creation of a new website for parents to further the communication opportunities between home and school. This included the addition of you tube and pinterest in the website.
- The introduction of the Student Tracker software which allows the school to follow each individuals academic and social progress.
- The introduction of the MiniLit Literacy Intervention Program to support Infants students experiencing difficulties with literacy
- The continuation and improvement of our Parent Reading Workshop
- The implementation and consolidation of the 'new' English syllabus
- A professional development focus on the use of computer technology in the classroom

Priority Key Improvements for 2015

Priority Key Improvements for 2015 include:

- The further development and consolidation of both the school's LIFT and School House programs.
- A focus on the faith formation of staff.
- A major building project including the construction of a new library, four new classrooms, two toilet blocks, a canteen, sports room and outdoor under cover sports facility.
- The implementation of the 'new' Mathematics and Science and Technology syllabi as well as preparation for the 'new' History syllabus.
- The implementation of a new school timetable to enhance the learning environment.
- The consolidation of the school's LIFT and House program

- The introduction of the Multilit Program and a Comprehension Program that provides level two intervention for primary students experiencing difficulty with literacy.
- The introduction of contemporary educational furniture to enhance the learning spaces at the school.

SECTION TEN: PARENT, STUDENT AND TEACHER SATISFACTION

The opinions and ideas of parents, students and teachers are valued and sought. Their suggestions are incorporated into planning for and achieving improved outcomes for students. This year, the School has used a variety of processes to gain information about the level of satisfaction with the School from parents, students and teachers.

Parent Satisfaction

This year, as they have done for the past few years, the Catholic Schools Office commissioned a Queensland based company, MYP Corporation to conduct parent, staff and student surveys of the St Nicholas School community. The 5 areas surveyed were: Leadership, Resources, Catholic Ethos, Teaching/Learning, Improvement Process. The results are based on a 5 point scale: 4-5 An excellent outcome 3-4 A fair to good score 2-3 A poor result 1-2 There are significant issues 0-1 Very poor result.

Parents rated the school 4.42 on Leadership, 4.27 on Resources 4.20, on Catholic Ethos 4.19, on Teaching and Learning and 4.01 Improvement Processes. The results and comments made in the survey help inform the School's Annual Development Plan.

Student Satisfaction

This year, as they have done for the past few years, the Catholic Schools Office commissioned a Queensland based company, MYP Corporation to conduct parent, staff and student surveys of the St Nicholas School community. The 5 areas surveyed were: Leadership, Resources, Catholic Ethos, Teaching/Learning, Improvement Process. The results are based on a 5 point scale: 4-5 An excellent outcome 3-4 A fair to good score 2-3 A poor result 1-2 There are significant issues 0-1 Very poor result.

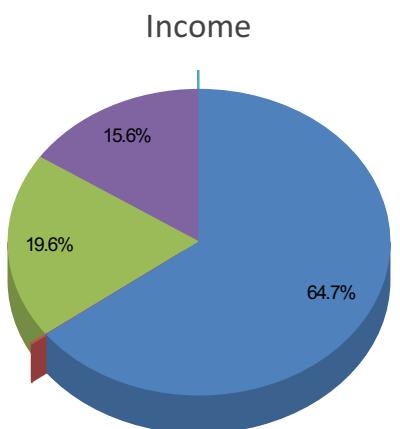
Students rated the school 4.50 on Leadership, 4.01 on Resources, 4.60 on Catholic Ethos, 4.30 on Teaching and Learning and 4.34 on Improvement Process. The results and comments made in the survey help inform the School's Annual Development Plan.

Teacher Satisfaction

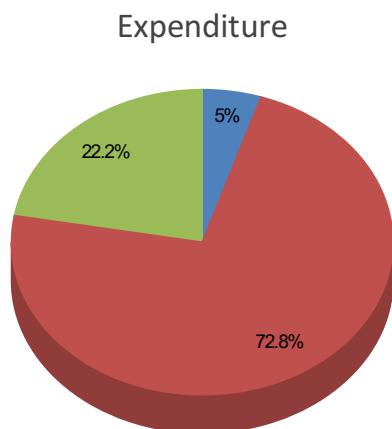
This year, as they have done for the past few years, the Catholic Schools Office commissioned a Queensland based company, MYP Corporation to conduct parent, staff and student surveys of the St Nicholas School community. The 5 areas surveyed were: Leadership, Resources, Catholic Ethos, Teaching/Learning, Improvement Process. The results are based on a 5 point scale: 4-5 An excellent outcome 3-4 A fair to good score 2-3 A poor result 1-2 There are significant issues 0-1 Very poor result.

Teachers rated the school 4.55 on Leadership, 4.27 on Resources, 4.63 on Catholic Ethos, 4.47 on Staff Engagement and 4.44 on Improvement Process. The school was very happy with the results and feedback provided by all sections of the school community.

SECTION ELEVEN: FINANCIAL STATEMENT



- Commonwealth Recurrent Grants (64.7%)
- Government Capital Grants (0%)
- State Recurrent Grants (19.6%)
- Fees and Private Income (15.6%)
- Other Capital Income (0.1%)



- Capital Expenditure (5%)
- Salaries and Related Expenses (72.8%)
- Non-Salary Expenses (22.2%)

This School Financial Information is based on the detailed information provided to the Commonwealth Government in the Commonwealth Financial Questionnaire.
School Financial Information for the 2014 year is detailed below:

RECURRENT and CAPITAL INCOME	
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants ¹	\$3,390,912
Government Capital Grants ²	\$2,143
State Recurrent Grants ³	\$1,029,470
Fees and Private Income ⁴	\$816,384
Other Capital Income ⁵	\$4,000
Total Income	\$5,213,466

RECURRENT and CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	
Capital Expenditure ⁶	\$233,941
Salaries and Related Expenses ⁷	\$3,412,560
Non-Salary Expenses ⁸	\$1,041,091
Total Expenditure	\$4,687,592

Notes

1. Commonwealth Recurrent Grants includes recurrent per capita grants and special purpose grants.
2. Government Capital Grants includes all capital grants received from the Commonwealth and State Governments.

3. State Recurrent Grants includes recurrent grants per capita, special purpose grants and interest subsidy grants.
4. Fees and Private Income include Archdiocesan and school based fees, excursions and other private income.
5. Other Capital Income includes building levy fees and capital donations used to fund Capital Expenditure.
6. Capital Expenditure includes expenditure on School Buildings, and Furniture and Equipment.
7. Salaries and Related Expenditure includes all salaries, allowances and related expenses such as superannuation and workers compensation insurance.
8. Non-Salary Expenses include all other Non-Salary Recurrent Expenditure covering resources, administration, operational expenses, utilities, repairs and maintenance.

Enrolment Policy

BISHOP'S COMMISSION FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

POLICY STATEMENT

ENROLMENT OF STUDENTS IN CATHOLIC SYSTEMIC SCHOOLS IN THE DIOCESE OF ARMIDALE

1. RATIONALE

The Catholic Church teaches that the “task of imparting education belongs primarily to the family” and that parents “have a primary and inalienable duty and right in regard to the education of their children”. (Vatican Council II, Decree on Christian Education, nn 3 & 6) Furthermore, parents have the duty ‘to entrust their children to Catholic schools whenever this is possible’. (*ibid*, n.8)

1.1 This policy addresses the needs of families seeking a Catholic education.

Its primary focus is to provide guidelines for the enrolment of children from Catholic families. Catholic families are defined as:

Families in which at least one parent is a Catholic or in which the children to be enrolled have been baptised Catholics.

1.2 This policy seeks to establish consistency across the Diocese in enrolment practices.

1.3 This policy reflects and supports the Diocesan Mission and Vision Statement (1997-2001 Catholic Schools Office Diocese of Armidale): To provide quality education for students in the Catholic Tradition in partnership with rural communities, and the words of Bishop Kevin Manning in launching this statement “Catholic schools in the Armidale Diocese aim to educate, to build community and to serve and thus support parents who are the primary and principal educators of their children.”

2. ESSENTIAL PROVISIONS

The following provisions are essential to the implementation of the policy:

2.1 Each school develops an enrolment policy which is consistent with the provisions of this and Annual School Report to the Community 2014

other Diocesan Policies and directives while being sensitive to local needs.

2.2 Each school establishes a school enrolment process.

2.2.1 This process encompasses the formulation, implementation and evaluation of the school's enrolment policy.

2.2.2 This process includes appropriate consultation between the Principal, the Parish Priest(s), the school board and relevant representatives of the community(ies) on which the school depends.

2.3 Each school will have an Application for Enrolment form as part of the school Enrolment Policy. See Appendix 2.

2.4 The school enrolment policy is available to all members of the parish and school communities and a copy is forwarded to the Diocesan Director of Schools.

2.5 All parents seeking to enrol children in Catholic schools are assisted to understand the ideals and principles upon which the Catholic School is based.

2.6 While children from all families who are prepared to support the ideals and principles of the Catholic school may be considered for enrolment, priority in enrolment is given in the following order, except in special circumstances: (See Bases of Discretion)

2.6.1 Children of Catholic families.

2.6.2 Non-Catholic children who have previously attended another Catholic school or whose parents, for religious reasons, wish them to have a Catholic education.

2.7 It is expected that children of Catholic families will normally make up at least 75% of the enrolment of the school. Permission to allow any significant departure from this norm must be sought from the Diocesan Director of Schools.

2.8 Enrolment age of children entering kindergarten must be in accordance with the directives in the CSO Administrative Handbook.

3. IDENTIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Prior to enrolment the educational needs of applicants will be identified. If the level of support

required is beyond the capacity/ability of the school to provide, the matter will be referred to the CSO to make a determination as to the ability of the Diocese to meet the needs of the applicant. Refer to Part A Handbook and Support Documents for Students with Special Needs, Diocese of Armidale.

4. SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

Children of families who are suffering financial hardship and related inability (as opposed to unwillingness) to pay school fees fully or in part should not find this an obstacle to enrolment within the terms of the Policy: Diocesan School Fees.

5. BASES OF DISCRETION

5.1 In relation to the implementation of the general and particular principles outlined in 2.2, consideration also may be given, as local needs require, for the following reasons:

5.1.1 family situations necessitating a pastoral approach or requiring the exercise of compassion,

5.1.2 parents' intention with regard to their own and their children's search for "education in the faith",

5.1.3 the enrolment of siblings of children already attending the school,

5.1.4 family circumstances involving relocation.

5.2 Full fee-paying overseas students may be enrolled in Catholic schools after the needs of local students who are eligible for enrolment have been met. Full fee paying overseas students are enrolled in accordance with the requirements of the Catholic Education Commission NSW, which are available from the Catholic Schools Office.

6. APPEALS

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified and given reasons for the rejected application by the School Principal and advised that they may appeal to the Diocesan Director of Catholic Schools. (See Appendix 1 "Procedures for Appeal").