

Annual School Report 2018 School Year

St Nicholas Primary School, Tamworth



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Tamworth NSW 2340

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stnicholastamworth.catholic.edu.au

Principal
Stefan van Aanholt

About this report

St Nicholas Primary School is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by the Diocese of Armidale Catholic Schools Office (CSO), as the 'approved authority' for the Registration System formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act 1990.

The *Annual Report to the School 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 to the school community information about initiatives and developments of major interest and importance and the achievements arising from the implementation of the school Improvement Plan.

The *Report* demonstrates accountability to the Federal and State Government regulatory bodies, the parish and school community and the Catholic Schools Office (CSO). This *Report* has been approved by the CSO which monitors school processes to ensure compliance with all NESA requirements for Registration.

This *Report* complements and is supplementary to school newsletters, and other regular communications. The *Report* is available on the school's and CSO's website by 30 June 2019 following its submission to NESA.

The contents of this *Report* may be tabled for discussion at various parent forums, including the School Advisory Council meetings, and all information is public.

Further information about the school or this *Report* may be obtained by contacting the school on 02 6766 1462 or by visiting the website at stnicholastamworth.catholic.edu.au.



1.0 Messages

1.1 Principal's Message

There were many people who assisted in the development of the school as a Catholic learning community. In particular, special thanks are extended to the parent body and the school staff for all their generous efforts. St Nicholas Primary School is indeed blessed to have such dedicated and enthusiastic people supporting the school.

The primary purpose of St Nicholas Primary School is to support the members of the parish community in providing a faith formation for their children. The school fosters a commitment to the individual person and provides opportunities for academic, cultural and sporting achievement. St Nicholas Primary School offers students a quality Catholic education based on the teaching of the Church and within the context of a strong faith community.

As a community of Faith, the students of St Nicholas School experience Catholic Education, worship and personal spiritual reflection in a creative, dynamic and vibrant way.

The school's contemporary and engaging learning spaces provide our students with outstanding modern educational facilities. Our educational practice is based on the principles of Professor John Hattie's research and visible learning philosophy, as well as the work of Canadian educator Dr Lynn Sharratt. We expect students to strive for, "2 more marks" in all they do.

A very important aspect of life at St Nicholas is the involvement of our parents. We encourage parents to become as engaged 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.

I thank all members of our school community, staff, parents and the parish community for their commitment and I am honoured to have lead such a wonderful community for the past seven years

Stefan van Aanholt
Principal

1.2 A Parent Message

This year has been a very exciting one for the school community as it was the first year that all classes across the school are in their new learning environments.

St Nicholas parents have once again shown what an asset they are to our school community. Over \$40 000 was raised by the PTF over the year by holding various fundraising activities. 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 Advisory Council has provided independent, objective advice to the school executive in financial management, policy development and other aspects of school life.

This report provides me with the opportunity to thank departing Principal Mr Stefan van Aanholt for his wonderful contribution over the past seven years. We will miss Mr V and wish him all the best for his future endeavours.

Mrs Katrina Wakely
President
Parents and Friends Association



2.0 This Catholic School

2.1 The School Community

St Nicholas Primary School is located in Tamworth and is part of the St Nicholas' Parish which serves the communities of St Nicholas Parish, from which the School families are drawn.

Last year the school celebrated 79 years of Catholic education.

The parish priest Fr Christopher Onuekwusi is involved in the life of the school.

2.2 Catholic Life and Religious Education

St Nicholas Primary 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.

The school has continued to incorporate the Catholic Principles and Values statements mandated by Bishop Michael Kennedy into the programs for All Key Learning Areas. Staff also attended a professional development day on the principle of *For The Common Good*.

Our Parish Priest Father Chris Onuekwusi visited the school on a weekly basis. Father Chris administered Reconciliation to Years Three to Six once a term and regularly spent time in all classrooms engaging with the students.

With the support of Father Chri 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, Ash Wednesday Mass and the Feast of Saint Joachim and Anne for Grandparent's Day. All parents, families and friends were invited to attend these Masses and parents, students and staff participated in a variety of ministry roles including Eucharistic Ministry.

Each term there were also opportunities for families to attend Family Mass on the first Sunday of the month at St Nicholas Parish. Staff also attended the First Friday Mass each month at St Nicholas Parish to again foster the importance of praying and gathering as one community. Seven students participated in altar server training and are now regular altar servers at weekend and school masses. Throughout the year the Sacramental Programs of First Holy Communion and Confirmation were offered and delivered to students in Year Three and Year Six. Parents and other family members participated through meetings and home programs The Sacrament of Confirmation was supported with a retreat that was attended by St Nicholas Parishioners, Bishop Michael Kennedy, teachers and the candidates.

Daily prayer continued for staff, students and parents throughout the year with school leaders leading the school community in prayer at assemblies and special events. Weekly memo meetings, staff meetings, monthly Board meetings, and Parents, Teachers and Friends meetings also began with prayer. Another part of the prayer life of the school was the opportunity offered to pray the Rosary during the month of October. Prayer was also included in each edition of the school's newsletter.

The school also had a visit from Papal Nuncio, His Excellency Archbishop Adolfo Tito Yllana in Term 4, where we were given the opportunity to showcase the school and provide him with the opportunity to meet with staff and students.

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.

Our School's average result (as a mark out of 50)	
Year 6	29

2.3 School Enrolment

St Nicholas Primary School caters for children from Years K to 6. The following table indicates the student enrolment characteristics:

	Year K	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	TOTAL 2018	TOTAL 2017
Male	43	40	50	37	41	39	35	285	265
Female	41	41	32	25	50	45	26	260	236

2.4 Student Attendance

In order for students to reach their full potential it is important that they attend school regularly. Whilst it is the parents' legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly, our staff as part of their duty of care monitor attendance each day. The Class Roll is marked every day and rolls are checked each week by the principal or their delegate. The school uses the attendance coding system adopted in all NSW schools. Unexplained absences are followed up promptly by staff. Parents are requested to provide a satisfactory explanation for an absence by means such as a written note, telephone call, sms message or email to the school preferably on the first day of absence, and certainly within seven days. The principal is made aware of sustained student absences or absences reflecting a pattern. In these situations, the principal or delegated staff member contacts the parent/guardian. Parents are encouraged to arrange medical and other necessary appointments outside school hours. Prolonged periods of absence occur from time-to-time for various reasons. In these cases, students and their parents meet with the principal to discuss the leave request.

The average student attendance rate for the school during 2018 is shown in the following table.

	Year K	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	All Years
Average Student Attendance Rates	94.0%	94.0%	94.0%	94.0%	94.0%	93.0%	93.0%	93.7%



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;
- monitoring engagement of individual students in their learning and identifying strategies to enhance engagement;
- 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;
- intervention strategies for students with unsatisfactory attendance may include academic case management, social case management, referral to counselling and parent/carer involvement;
- 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 previous strategies have failed to restore regular attendance.

When the Catholic Schools Office Armidale is notified of a student for whom chronic nonattendance is an issue and previous strategies have failed the Principal and the School Consultant will convene a meeting with the family, the student, and other agencies, if required, to develop a Return to School Plan.

2.5 Staff Profile and Teacher Standards

Teacher Qualifications / Staff Profile	Number of Teachers
1. Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Provisional or Conditional level.	1
2. Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Proficient level.	30
3. Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Highly Accomplished level.	0
4. Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Lead level.	0
5. Teachers with recognised qualifications to teach Religious Education.	28
6. Number of staff identifying as Indigenous employed at the school.	1
7. Total number of non-teaching staff employed at the school.	11



2.6 Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

The school ensures that at every available formal and informal opportunity the values of respect and responsibility are promoted. We want every student to understand and appreciate that they are part of both the school and the local community.

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.

An extensive student leadership program is in place at the school which seeks to support students develop their skills and sense of responsibility.

2.7 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 Brisbane based company, Survey My School to conduct parent, staff and student surveys of the St Nicholas School community. Areas surveyed included: School Leadership, School Resources and Facilities, Catholic Ethos and Identity, Teaching/Learning and School Improvement Processes. The results are based on a 3 point scale: 2-3 An excellent outcome, 1-2 A fair to good score, 0-1 A poor result and significant issues need to be addressed.

245 parents (45%) completed the survey. In all areas of the survey parents rated the school in the 2-3 point scale range which was very pleasing. Parents were also given the option to express any concerns.

Both the data and parent comments are important in helping the school plan for the following year as well as addressing pressing concerns as soon as possible.



Student Satisfaction

This year, as they have done for the past few years, the Catholic Schools Office commissioned a Brisbane based company, Survey My School to conduct parent, staff and student surveys of the St Nicholas School community. Areas surveyed included: School Leadership, School Resources and Facilities, Catholic Ethos and Identity, Teaching/Learning and School Improvement Processes. The results are based on a 3 point scale: 2-3 An excellent outcome, 1-2 A fair to good score, 0-1 A poor result and significant issues need to be addressed.

223 students (96%) completed the survey. In all areas of the survey students rated the school in the 2-3 point scale range which was very pleasing. Students were also given the option to express any concerns or ideas. Apart from lemonade in the bubblers and a swimming pool the student responses reflected a very mature approach to the survey. Particularly pleasing was that the vast majority of students indicated that they felt safe and happy at school.

Both the data and student comments are important in helping the school plan for the following year as well as addressing pressing concerns as soon as possible.

Staff Satisfaction

This year, as they have done for the past few years, the Catholic Schools Office commissioned a Brisbane based company, Survey My School to conduct parent, staff and student surveys of the St Nicholas School community. Areas surveyed included: School Leadership, School Resources and Facilities, Catholic Ethos and Identity, Teaching/Learning and School Improvement Processes. The results are based on a 3 point scale: 2-3 An excellent outcome, 1-2 A fair to good score, 0-1 A poor result and significant issues need to be addressed.

22 teachers (76%) completed the survey. In all areas of the survey teachers rated the school in the 2-3 point scale range which was very pleasing. Teachers were also given the option to express their opinion on a wide range of topics.

Both the data and parent comments are important in helping the school plan for the following year as well as addressing pressing concerns as soon as possible.

3.0 Teaching and Learning

3.1 School Curriculum

The school provides an educational program based on, and taught in accordance with the NESA 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.

As a Catholic School, Religious Education is a mandatory key learning included in the curriculum for students in each grade. St Nicholas Primary School is committed to providing a quality education that meets the needs of all students.

The school provides an educational program based on, and taught in accordance with the Board of Studies, Teaching 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.



3.2 Student Performance in National Testing Programs

3.2.1 NAPLAN

The school participated in the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) with students in Years 3 and 5 tested. In Year 3, 58 students presented for the tests while in Year 5 there were 82 students.

In Literacy there were four elements tested. These were reading, writing, spelling and grammar and punctuation. In Numeracy, students were tested in number, patterns and algebra, measurement, data and space and geometry.

In both Year 3 and Year 5 there are six achievement bands with Band 6 being the highest level of attainment in Year 3 and Band 8 the highest in Year 5.

The Commonwealth Government has set minimum acceptable standards for reading, writing and numeracy at particular ages.

At St Nicholas Primary School, school and student performance is closely monitored. These tests are one means of gathering data on individual student and school achievement. School staff have participated in Catholic Schools Office information sessions on NAPLAN and Data Analysis workshops.

The following data indicates the percentage of St Nicholas Primary School students in each band compared to the State percentage.



Year 3 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy												
Percentage of students in Bands 1 to 6												
BAND	6		5		4		3		2		1	
	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	School
Reading	30.3	17.2	23.9	19.0	22.5	19.0	13.8	10.3	5.9	6.9	2.0	3.4
Writing	15.2	12.1	30.0	44.8	29.5	31.0	15.6	12.1	5.4	0.0	2.9	0.0
Spelling	27.2	15.5	23.6	24.1	21.9	31.0	14.8	12.1	7.6	5.2	3.2	0.0
Grammar and Punctuation	32.1	31.0	24.4	15.5	18.2	20.7	13.2	3.4	7.4	10.3	3.0	1.7
Numeracy	18.4	19.0	23.7	32.8	26.6	22.4	18.8	15.5	8.6	6.9	2.3	0.0

Year 5 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy												
Percentage of students in Bands 3 to 8												
BAND	8		7		6		5		4		3	
	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	School
Reading	16.7	18.3	22.4	28.0	26.6	28.0	20.0	17.1	9.5	1.2	3.3	2.4
Writing	4.0	3.7	12.3	19.5	30.4	26.8	30.3	41.5	14.5	8.5	7.3	0.0
Spelling	15.2	7.3	23.4	31.7	28.2	34.1	19.2	20.7	8.8	3.7	3.6	1.2
Grammar and Punctuation	15.7	18.3	22.3	18.3	28.1	30.5	18.5	20.7	9.3	6.1	0.0	0.0
Numeracy	11.6	13.4	19.2	26.8	29.0	34.1	25.0	22.0	11.1	1.2	2.6	0.0

NOTE: Where a year level has five or less students the information is withheld to protect the privacy of the students



3.3 Teacher 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 development days this year with the areas of focus as follows:

Term 1	Where to in 2018? Deepening staff understanding of the school's Annual Improvement Plan for 2018.
Term 2	Catholic Core Principles and Values. Focus on "For The Common Good".
Term 3	Daniela Felecki Building Staff Resillience From The Inside Out.
Term 4	Strategic Directions for the 2019 School Year.

4.0 School Policies

4.1 Enrolment Policy

The Diocese of Armidale adheres to the policy as endorsed by the Bishops Commission for Catholic Schools 'Enrolment Policy' 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.

This school does not have any enrolment policies or support documents in addition to the Bishop's Commission for Catholic Schools 'Enrolment Policy' for schools in the Diocese of Armidale. This policy is available on the *School's website* stnicholastamworth.catholic.edu.au and the Armidale Catholic Schools Office website at <https://www.arm.catholic.edu.au>

4.2 Pastoral Care Policy

Jesus Christ and his teachings are the basis of all we do at St Nicholas Primary School Christ's teachings therefore should relate to how our staff develop student self-discipline. We believe in a holistic approach to individual development. Such an approach aims to develop the intellectual, physical, emotional, social, aesthetic, moral and spiritual dimensions of a child. We aim to bring this about in our school by promoting self-worth and by encouraging each individual to answer to one's self for one's own actions.



All people attending St Nicholas Primary School have the right to be treated:

- justly
- respectfully
- fairly

No changes were made to the 'Pastoral Care Policy' this year.

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

4.3 Student 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.

No changes were made to the 'Student Discipline Policy' this year.

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

4.4 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

The Catholic Schools Office, Armidale has established a 'Bullying Prevention and Intervention 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 'Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy' this year.

The full text of the School's 'Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy' may be accessed on the School's website stnicholastamworth.catholic.edu.au, the administration office or on the CSO website.

4.5 Complaints Handling Policy and Guide

The Diocese of Armidale has established a 'Complaints Handling Policy and Guide' which is implemented by our school. The rationale for this policy 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 policies.

No changes were made to the policy this year.

The full text of the policy may be accessed on the School's website stnicholastamworth.catholic.edu.au or the administration office.

5.0 School Review and Improvement

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 Catholic School's Office Annual Improvement Plan. 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 2018

The school's Annual Improvement Plan for 2018 focused on three key areas: Faith Formations, Differentiating the Learning for each student (National School Improvement Tool Number 7) and Well Being for staff and students.

Faith Formation:

- Teachers deepened their understanding of Catholic Identity and Culture in particular the Catholic understanding of For The Common Good.
- With additional Religious Education Coordinator support teachers' skills in their capacity to teach Religious Education was enhanced.
- The development of a new Mission Statement that encapsulates the ethos and direction of the school.

Differentiated Teaching and Learning

- Each student to demonstrate growth in their learning and identify areas for improvement. The growth target for each student in Years 2 to Year 6 is based on Australian Council of Education Research (ACER) PAT Tests, which has been set at the national average plus 25% for each student. In Year Kindergarten to Year 2 PM Reading growth of 8 for each student.
- A very clear focus and learning intentions and success criteria

Well Being of Staff and Students.

- To create a culture where the well being of staff and students is a priority.

Priority Key Improvements for 2019

The school will continue to focus on the faith and spiritual development of both staff and students with an emphasis on prayer life and the Catholic understanding of, "For The Common Good".

The continued focus on uninterrupted literacy blocks with an emphasis on learning intentions, success criteria and the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model as sound pedagogical practice.

A focus on a growth mindset that fosters in each learner the understanding that everyone has the capacity and ability to improve not only academically but in all dimensions.

The continued journey to integrate STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) into the daily delivery of the curriculum.

A continued focus on the well being of all members of the school community, building resilience, empathy and a positive mindset.

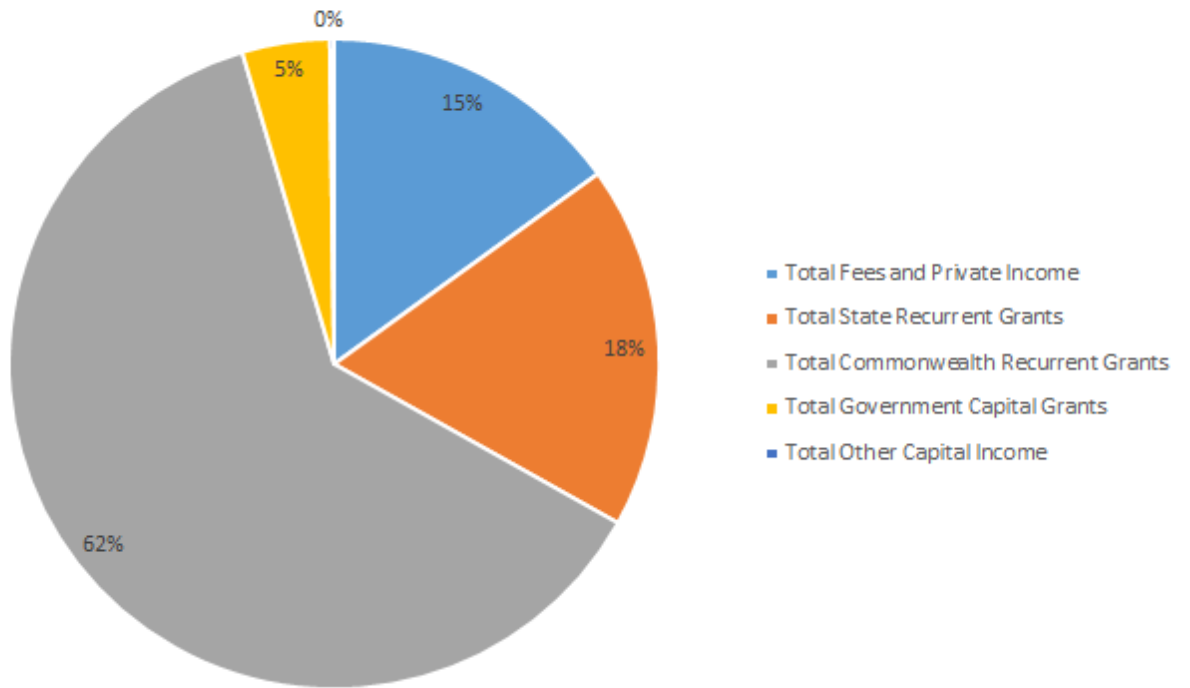
6.0 Financial Information

Catholic schools are accountable for all monies received. Each year, the Diocese of Armidale Catholic Schools Office submits to the Commonwealth Government a financial statement on behalf of the parish primary schools, K-10 schools and secondary colleges. This statement details the income and expenditure of each school. In addition, the financial accounts for each school and for the Catholic Schools Office are audited annually.

A visual summary of the income and expenditure reported to the Commonwealth Government for 2018 is presented below:



2018 Income - St Nicholas Primary School, Tamworth



2018 Expenditure - St Nicholas Primary School, Tamworth

