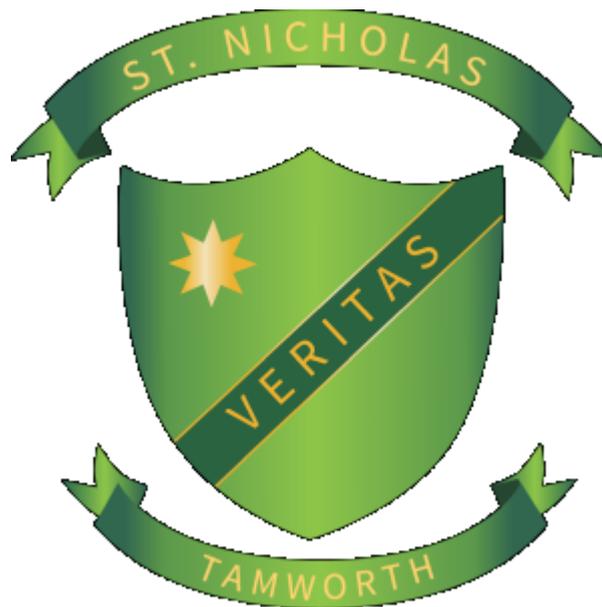


# Annual School Report 2020 School Year

St Nicholas Primary School, Tamworth



143-149 Carthage Street  
Tamworth NSW 2340

Phone 02 6766 1462  
<https://stnicholastamworth.catholic.edu.au>

Principal  
John Clery

## **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 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 Annual Improvement Plan.

The report demonstrates accountability to the Federal and State Government regulatory bodies, the parish and school community and the CSO. This report, approved by the CSO, 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. It is available on both school and CSO websites by 30 June 2021 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 school's website <https://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.

Words which best describe 2020:

- CoronaVirus
- Pandemic
- Bushfire
- Drought
- Unemployment
- Restrictions
- Lockdown
- Contact tracing
- Toilet paper shortage and Donald Trump

Playing the same game for St Nicholas Primary School:

- Campfire, Waterhole, Cave
- Professional Learning Teams
- Guided Reading
- Big Write
- VCOP
- Student growth
- LIFT-Off Learning
- Daily Communique
- Quality connections
- Sensory Courtyard
- Resilience and Adaptability

While 2020 will go down as one of the toughest years on record, St Nicholas' has to reason to celebrate and be extremely proud of getting on with the core business of the school; leading the learning and wellbeing of the school community with Jesus at the heart of all we do.

During the most difficult days of the pandemic, St Nicholas Primary School was focused on providing stability to the community through quality connections, visibility and daily communication. When media platforms were disgracefully causing hysteria, announcing that children would be losing up to a years worth of learning, St Nicholas' students were engaging in quality L.I.F.T-Off learning. This was never about replicating the school day, rather providing meaningful and engaging learning opportunities for students, with a focus on literacy and numeracy.

The year certainly threw more challenges than could ever have envisaged. The St Nicholas school community should, however, be extremely proud. Not only was each challenge met head on, we have achieved our most important goal, a goal set before COVID-19 reached our shores. We knew St Nicholas was a good school, but we committed to make it an even better school than it was at the beginning of 2020. And it most certainly is! A wise man once said, "A gem cannot be polished



without friction, nor men perfected without trials". This school is the gem that we will continue to polish and we are the people who, despite trial and adversity will continue to strive to be even better.

John Clery  
Principal

## 1.2 A Parent Message

The 2020 school year will forever be remembered for the Coronavirus pandemic. This led to a very different partnership between home and school. St Nicholas Primary School's commitment to having its families feel connected, enabled a 'very different partnership' to still be a very successful partnership.

The key to the partnership's success was clear communication and planning. A plan that from early in the pandemic involved:

- Stay calm,
- Look after your own wellbeing,
- If parents fall apart, so will the children,
- Love our children,
- Clearly articulated communication to the school community,
- A school wide response, supported by the system of schools, to learning during the Coronavirus pandemic,
- With a school wide response, significant autonomy was given to individual grades and teachers, recognising that these teachers knew the students best and learning must look different across grades,
- Learning would be different during the pandemic,
- St Nicholas would not attempt to replicate a school day to be completed at home,
- L.I.F.T-Off Learning was based on 2-3 hours of quality learning experiences,
- While children were not learning traditionally, or even traditional subjects, they were learning. L.I.F.T-Off learning is wonderful learning where students developed foundations and skills which will set them up to become independent and lifelong learners,
- L.I.F.T-Off Learning) will evolve,
- While we can be proud of what has been achieved to date, we can also be proud of how it has evolved. This evolution will continue, for the school has a culture of improvement.

Finally:

- Stay calm.
- If parents are struggling with the learning platform (L.I.F.T-Off Learning), do not stress. Close the device and encourage your child to read. When this pandemic is over, and it will be one day, feel comforted in knowing that teachers are experts in identifying where each child is in the learning journey. Students will be provided with the right learning opportunities to ensure they reach their very vast potential.

While Coronavirus prevented the parent body from being onsite, parents at St Nicholas Primary School still had the opportunity to be actively involved in their child's education throughout 2020.

Michael Mulligan



Chairperson  
School Advisory Council

## 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 Tamworth and surrounding areas, from which the school families are drawn.

Last year the school celebrated 81 years of Catholic education.

The parish priest, Fr Chris 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 continued to incorporate the Catholic Principles and Values statements mandated by Bishop Michael Kennedy into the programs for All Key Learning Areas. The parish priest, Father Chris Onuekwusi, visited the school on a weekly basis. Father Chris administered reconciliation to Years 3-6 and spent time in all classrooms engaging with students.

Throughout the year, the sacramental programs of penance, first Holy Communion and confirmation were offered and delivered to students in Year 3 and Year 6. Coronavirus restrictions affected the services, though did not prevent or affect this holy experience for the children. Parents and other family members participated through meetings and home programs. The sacrament of confirmation was supported with a retreat.

With the support of Father Chris, the school celebrated four feast days and special events. Due to the pandemic, the platform changed in 2020, though not the significance of celebration or opportunity for reflection.

Daily prayer continued for staff, students and parents throughout the year. Weekly memo meetings, staff meetings, termly School Advisory Council meetings, and Parents, Teachers and Friends meetings also began with prayer. Prayer was also included in each edition of the school's newsletter.

Students in Year 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 30)	
Year 6	19

### 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 2020	TOTAL 2019



<b>Male</b>	43	45	48	42	52	44	40	314	302
<b>Female</b>	37	40	40	47	35	33	48	280	288
<b>Totals</b>	80	85	88	89	87	77	88	594	590

## 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, school 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 2020 is shown in the following table.

	<b>Year K</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>	<b>Year 6</b>	<b>All Years</b>
<b>Average Student Attendance Rates</b>	94.0%	94.0%	94.0%	93.0%	94.0%	91.0%	93.0%	93.3%

### 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 non attendance 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.	3
2.	Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Proficient level.	38
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.	36
6.	Number of staff identifying as Indigenous employed at the school.	1
7.	Total number of non-teaching staff employed at the school.	18

## 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. The school models and teaches students about respect and responsibility in a number of ways:

- St Nicholas Primary School promotes respect and responsibility by focusing on the Catholic Principles and Values. This is particularly evident through the 'Manners Matter' initiative, ensuring students are taught, encouraged and reminded on a regular basis to display behaviour that is polite and courteous. This includes though is not limited to:
  - standing up to let an adult or elderly person sit down.
  - looking a person in the eye when shaking hands.
  - saying 'excuse me' when walking 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 a few of 'life's little lessons', but they are taught and modelled each day by teachers and students.
- St Nicholas Primary School regards good manners as showing respect for other people and showing respect for good standards of 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 Primary School.
- 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**

A completion rate of 49% was achieved with 320 parents completing the survey. This is considered excellent. In all areas of the survey parents rated the school in the 2-3 point scale range which was very pleasing. The highest commendations from the parent community were for:

- The school is a safe place for my child
- I would recommend this school to others
- I am happy with the school facilities
- The school is well maintained

Parents were given the option to expand on their commendations and express concerns, through a written response. This data is important in helping the school plan for the following year as well as addressing pressing concerns as soon as possible.

### **Student Satisfaction**

A completion rate of 72% was achieved with 194 of 270 Year 4-6 students completing the survey. In all areas of the survey, students rated the school in the 2-3 point scale range which was very pleasing. The highest commendations from students were for:

- I would recommend this school to others
- My teachers care about me
- All my teachers encourage me to do my best
- My teacher suggests ways to improve my learning
- I am encouraged to care for others

Students were given the option to expand on their commendations and express concerns, through a written response. This data is important in helping the school plan for the following year as well as addressing pressing concerns as soon as possible.

### **Staff Satisfaction**



A completion rate of 89% was achieved with 49 staff completing the survey. This is considered excellent. In all areas of the survey staff rated the school in the 2-3 point scale range which was very pleasing. The highest commendations from staff were for:

- I would recommend this school to others
- This school is well maintained e.g. clean, buildings painted etc
- I have opportunities to enhance my students' learning through the use of technology

Staff were given the option to expand on their commendations and express concerns, through a written response. This data is 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.

Religious Education in Catholic schools is a mandatory KLA included in the curriculum for students in each year group. St Nicholas Primary School is committed to providing a quality education that meets the needs of all students.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic St Nicholas remote learning platform during 2020 was titled L.I.F.T-Off Learning. L.I.F.T-Off Learning never attempted to reciprocate the school day, rather focus on quality learning opportunities in English and Mathematics.

#### **3.2 Student Performance in National Testing Programs**

##### **3.2.1 NAPLAN**

There are no NAPLAN results to report in 2020 as a result of the decision by the Australian Government for students not to participate in the NAPLAN Assessments due to the circumstances of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

#### **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.

Whole staff development day professional learning activities in 2020 were:

<b>Staff Professional Learning Activity</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Presenter</b>
2020 Review and Strategic Planning for 2021	17/12/2020	St Nicholas Leadership Team



2020 Review and Strategic Planning for 2021	18/12/2020	St Nicholas Leadership Team
Compass Rollout	03/07/2020	Kim kliendienst
School & System Registration & Compliance	28/01/2020	John Clery
Expert Teaching Teams	29/01/2020	Amanbda Doyle & Shelly O'Sullivan
Faith Formation: What is Evangelisation	20/07/2020	CSO Faith Formation Team

#### 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 Bishops Commission for Catholic Schools 'Enrolment Policy' for schools in the Diocese of Armidale. This policy is available on the school's website <https://stnicholastamworth.catholic.edu.au> and the Armidale Catholic Schools Office [website](#).

##### 4.2 Pastoral Care Policy

Jesus Christ and his teachings are the basis of all that occurs at St Nicholas Primary School. Christ's teachings therefore should relate to how staff develop student self-discipline. The school community believes 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. Staff aim to bring this about in the 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 <https://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 <https://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 the 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 <https://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 this 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 the contemporary world. The Catholic Schools Office monitors the implementation of these policies.

*No changes were made to the 'Complaints Handling Policy and Guide' this year.*

*The full text of the school's 'Complaints Handling Policy and Guide' may be accessed on the school's website <https://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 Schools 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 Goals Achieved and Implemented in 2020	Key Goals for 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Under the School Improvement pillar of A Relentless Focus on Learning, St Nicholas Primary School achieved growth in three sandstone blocks of school improvement:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Implemented teaching and learning methodologies which improved student reading and writing outcomes</li><li>○ Structured learning spaces to support the delivery of the Gradual Release of Responsibility</li><li>○ Up-skilled teacher capacity (through professional dialogue and engagement with data) resulting in improved student literacy results</li></ul></li><li>● Under the School Improvement pillar of Wellbeing, St Nicholas Primary School</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Under the School Improvement pillar of "Living Like Jesus", St Nicholas Primary School has set goals of:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Commencing the implementation of the Systems "Living well, Learning Well Framework</li><li>○ Implementation of the Faith Formation Framework: Year 2 of 3 year plan</li><li>○ Engaging Religious Education Teaching and Learning Programs (Deepen Catholic Identity and Culture: Theory to Practice)</li></ul></li><li>● Under the School Improvement pillar of "Literacy/Pedagogy" St Nicholas Primary School has set goals of:</li></ul>



<p>achieved growth in two sandstone blocks of school improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Created a more inclusive environment for staff and students that fostered wellbeing in the work and learning spaces</li> <li>○ Staffroom was refurbished and a designated PLT Room was created</li> <li>● Under the School Improvement pillar of Faith, St Nicholas Primary School achieved growth in two sandstone blocks of school improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Implemented a new Mission Statement throughout the school community</li> <li>○ Deepened the Catholic Identity and Culture (Looking at our Founders) of St Nicholas Religious Education Teaching &amp; Learning Programs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A tight literacy block reflecting the Gradual Release of Responsibility imbedded from K-6</li> <li>○ Delivery of Tiered Intervention in reading K-6</li> <li>● Under the School Improvement pillar of "High Functioning Teams" in 2021 St Nicholas Primary School has set goals of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Staff working in positive and productive teams, making valuable contributions towards student learning and growth</li> <li>○ Implementation of Student-Led Conferencing for Semester One reporting to parents</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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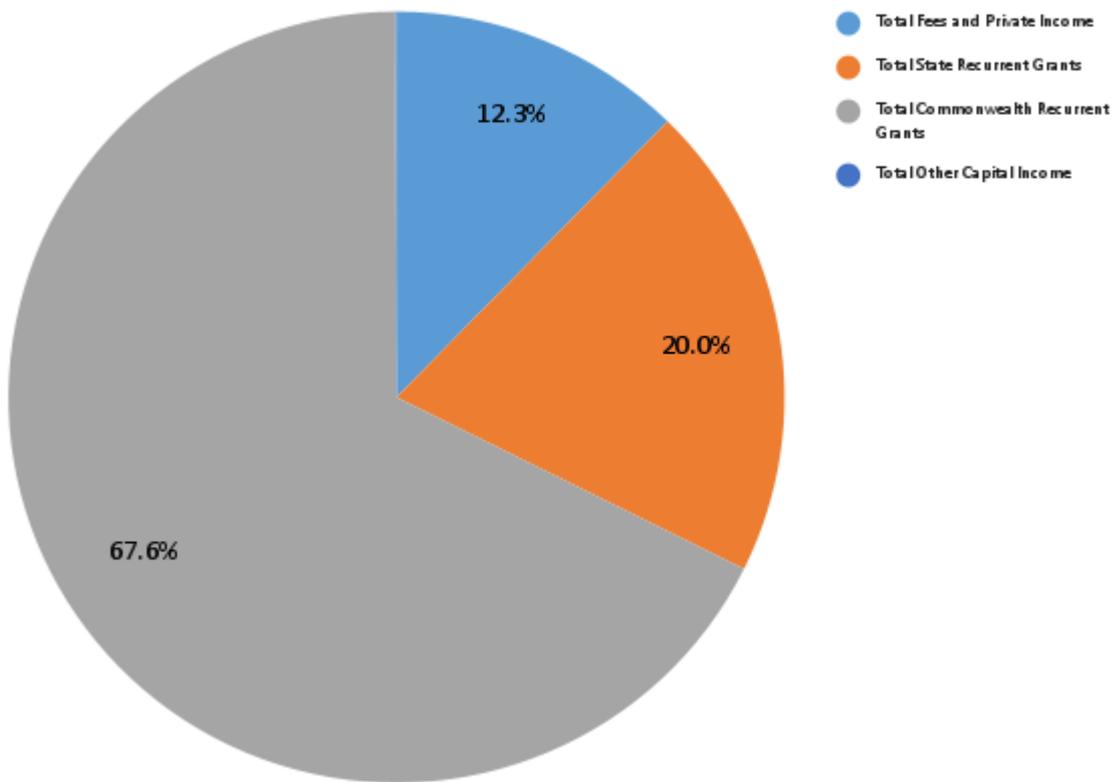
## 6.0 Financial Information

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 2020 is presented below:



### 2020 Income - St Nicholas Primary School, Tamworth



### 2020 Expenditure - St Nicholas Primary School, Tamworth

