



2014

# Annual Report

*St Mary's Primary School, Corowa*

## CONTACT DETAILS:

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## The School

St Mary's is a co-educational school catering for students from Kindergarten to Year 6. Our school serves the needs of the Catholic Community of Corowa in providing a quality Catholic education for all students in our care.

St. Mary's school is part of the St Mary's Star of the Sea Parish. Our school enjoys strong support from Father Paul, and our parishioners. We work diligently to form a strong community of faith through the exchange of ideas and activities.

Our staff endeavours to teach up-to-date research-based learning and teaching practices to assist all students in developing, spiritually, academically, physically, emotionally and socially.

We hope that you enjoy our annual report for 2013.

## Catholic Identity

We believe St Mary's Primary School is a community in which:

✠ Jesus is our prime focus enabling us to be active members of a faith-filled community.

✠ Children are prepared in a collaborative, cooperative and supportive environment, for the changing world, through the promotion of a comprehensive quality curriculum.

✠ The dignity of each person is upheld and respected, and where the ideas of compassion and justice are allowed to flourish.

✠ Parents, the parish and teachers work towards the total development of the child in a safe, cooperative and collaborative learning community.

The school's Religious Education Syllabus is 'Sharing Our Story'. We have improved resources and developed the area of assessment in line with the syllabus.

The teaching of Religious Education occurs daily in all classrooms, with all children learning about their Catholic faith and covering the strands of God, Jesus, Church, Sacraments, Scripture, Christian Life and Prayer.

Staff and children are involved in the preparation of school and class liturgies throughout the year.

The Sacramental Programme included regular liturgical celebrations in students' homes as

well as in St Mary's Parish Church, with each programme culminating in the celebration of the particular sacrament (Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist and Confirmation).

Bishop Hanna celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation this year. This was a highlight of the year for our senior students. Year 6 students participated in the National Religious Education Test again in June.

As part of our commitment to justice and equity our staff have lead the students through an understanding of being grateful and showing care and compassion for those less fortunate than ourselves. This guidance is revealed by the many opportunities the children lead to show this care and compassion. Their deeper understanding of our global responsibilities is evident in their expressions of love through Caritas Australia.

Children across all grades raised money for Catholic Missions throughout the year, through Project Compassion during Lent and casual clothes days, a rice day and competitions during Mission weeks. Money raised assisted the poor in Australia and abroad.

Children made visits to Karinya House, the local nursing and retirement home, to meet with and entertain the elderly residents at different times throughout the year.

We encourage all families to be committed to their Catholic School and Parish and contribute to the learning of the children through their participation in school life and parish life. We would like to encourage more families to participate in our school Masses and our weekend Masses. We have had special children's Masses on the weekends. These are a wonderful way for the young students to learn more about what is involved at Mass and how they can be a part of it.

We welcome all families to our school and encourage parents to be fully engaged in their child's learning journey. This can be through an awareness of what happens in our school, through assistance in the classroom, supporting their child at home with the reading of literature and developing a love of reading; assisting at sporting events or generously giving their time during fundraising efforts throughout the year. We encourage all parents to meet with their child's teacher and develop a supportive

relationship with them. This partnership between home and school is a wonderful support to all students, staff and parents within our school and produces positive outcomes for their children.

## **A Message from key School Bodies**

### **School Council Chairperson's Report 2014**

2014 has been another successful year for St Mary's Corowa School Council.

School maintenance programs for 2013 include the construction railing and fence near the kinder class room and ongoing garden improvements.

School Council projects for 2015 include much needed maintenance of the exterior of original school building. This will be a costly project that needs to be completed before damage starts to occur to windows and gutters.

The P & F Committee and fete committee have once again done a fantastic job this year. The school fete continues to be a great event and is a credit to all involved. The change of venue has been a great success with a great day had by all. This year the P & F contributed money towards many projects including \$2,000 towards school production and \$8,000 to school for books and classroom resources.

The school has undergone a uniform review and upgrade. The uniform policy has been announced and will be implemented over the next 2 years. The changes were voted by parents and I urge all families to meet the policy standards.

This year St Mary's has been fortunate to have 2 new teachers Michael Howard & Jackie O'Donohue. We wish Jackie well with her new role in Wodonga next year and thank her for efforts.

St Mary's School Council will have a number of retiring members and the end of 2014. Lynda Evers, Jack Seymour & I have been involved for past 3 years with Jack managing most of the maintenance projects and Linda doing great job as treasurer. We look forward to welcoming new council members in 2015.

Thank you to Jo Schmidt, Father Paul Hart, our teaching staff, parents, carers, P & F and Fete Committees for their tireless hard work and commitment to make St Mary's a great place for our children to learn.

### **Stephen Blain**

Chairperson St Mary's School Council.

### **Student Outcomes in Standardised National Literacy and Numeracy Testing**

Each year, the staff develop a focus for learning from analysis of the Data from Naplan. The aim is to improve learning outcomes through explicit teaching and effective feedback. The structures put in place are strategic in achieving the desired outcomes across all year levels.

A summary of the areas of focus:

#### Year 3 Reading

- Making inferences by examining information in different texts and contexts
- Identifying the main idea
- Connecting ideas & linking information.

#### Year 3 Writing

- Using persuasive writing structure and devices to persuade the reader
- Using effective text structure
- Awareness of paragraphing.
- Spelling – improving awareness of unusual spelling and plurals where ending is changed.
- Grammar – identifying pronouns & adverbs.

#### Year 3 Numeracy

- Data: Interpreting data from tables.
- Addition: Solving word problems
- 3D space: Identifying shapes made by cutting a disc.
- Identifies perimeter of a shape.

#### Year 5 Reading

- Vocabulary: Identifying words that change the mood.
- Making inferences by examining information in different texts and contexts
- Connecting ideas & compares comments.
- Identifies purpose of an introduction.
- Making inferences by examining information in different texts and contexts
- Main idea is identified in online discussion.

#### Year 5 Writing

- Using persuasive devices to enhance the writer's position to persuade the reader.
- Vocabulary – Developing the use of simple words to more complex and appropriate words.
- Spelling and Punctuation – The use of correct and appropriate punctuation, and correct spelling of difficult words.

#### Year 5 Numeracy

- Algebra: solves a number sentence in the form of  $a/?=b$
- Data: matching information in a table to a line graph.
- Fractions & decimals: recognises different representations of a number with two decimal places.
- Ratios: solves a word problem involving proportional reasoning.
- Division: Solve a problem which includes rounding down.

#### Professional Learning

In 2014 our staff participated in Professional Learning focused on priority areas from our School Renewal Framework. This complemented our Learning and Teaching within the school focusing on up to date educational research from leading academics.

Professional learning and development included:

- Child Protection
- Duty of Care
- Our Faith Story
- SENA training
- CPR
- Australian Curriculum
- Curriculum Reviews
- Live Life Well @ School
- Spirituality

#### Teaching Staff

The NSW government requires that this report detail the number of teachers in the following categories:

- having teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines, or
- having a bachelor degree from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lacking formal teacher education qualifications.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
9		9

#### Workforce Composition

- Indigenous
- Non-Indigenous

<b>Staff</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>
Principal		1
Teaching Staff		8
Non-Teaching Staff		3

#### Student Attendance

*Student attendance rates for each Year level and the whole school*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Attendance %</b>
Kinder	93%
Year 1	93%
Year 2	92%
Year 3	95%
Year 4	95%
Year 5	94%
Year 6	96%

#### Student Non-Attendance

Parents are requested to communicate with our school and are asked to ring up the school and send a note to explain when their child was absent. Parents are sent reminder notices if a child has been absent from school and communication has not been received within 7 school days of the absence. Families are reminded that if their child needs to be absent from school for an extended period of time that they must complete an exemption form. This form is filed and a Certificate of Exemption is issued to the parent. These Exemption forms available from the office upon request.

#### Enrolment Policy

Our school refers to the Catholic Schools Office Enrolment Policy and we work within their guidelines.

#### Characteristics of the Student Body

Boys: 66  
 Girls: 77  
 LOTE: 7  
 Indigenous: 2

Total: 143

## **School Policies**

### Student Welfare

Students may at times need reassurance and support in dealing with issues that confront them during their life.

We have a Centacare Liaison officer who is available to work with our students on a fortnightly basis. This service can be utilized by any student. Parents and teachers may request a referral and this is followed up with discussions with the parents and then the student. This has been a very successful service to assist a student's wellbeing.

We have a Well-being Team who meet fortnightly to assist in pastoral care of all students.

Pastoral care provides opportunities for our students to:

- Enjoy success and celebrate achievements.
- Be able to contribute positively to our school.
- Foster a love of learning
- Be guided by the Catholic Schools Office policies.

We use Restorative Practices to assist students in acknowledging their part in conflict and being aware of any hurt that they may have caused. Restorative Practices gives students a way of learning and changing behaviours for the future. Restorative Practices are based on inclusion, forgiveness and compassion. We recognise that this learning develops over time and needs constant revisiting along a child's life journey.

### Discipline

At St Mary's School we are committed to ensuring that each child feels safe, happy and secure. Therefore we take seriously our responsibility to employ effective strategies to allow this to happen.

We involve students, parents and staff in the development of strategies to assist all members to feel safe, happy and secure. We use restorative practices when dealing with children to assist them in reflecting on their actions through the lens of compassion, inclusion and forgiveness.

Behavioural Plans may need to be designed for individual cases. This is created with the student, teacher and parent and communicated to all parties as required.

### Complaints and Grievances

Our school refers to the Catholic Schools Office Complaints and Grievances Policy and we work within their guidelines.

The link to the school's Complaints and Grievances is: [www.csoww.catholic.edu.au](http://www.csoww.catholic.edu.au)

### Anti-Bullying

Our Anti-Bullying policy is based on the beliefs that:

Bullying cannot be ignored.

Bullying is not acceptable and does not have to happen.

Each child has the right to feel safe, happy and part of our school community.

At St Mary's we have a zero tolerance of bullying and are committed to ensuring that each child feels safe, happy and secure. We believe that the most effective strategies employed by our school shall involve staff, students and parents.

All classes utilize the "Bounce Back" programme to help eliminate bullying, and build resilience in all children. Parents and children are aware of the consequences of bullying behavior.

### Changes to School Policies

We have reviewed our policies throughout the year and altered our Uniform Policy. We have updated the School Policy and General Information booklet.

We are developing a lock down policy in reference to the CSO policy guidelines and procedures, and have worked on our Induction policy for new staff members.

This year we have reviewed the Curriculum policies of English, PDHPE and Science and Technology.

## **Improvement Targets**

Our main priorities in our Annual Improvement Plan are:

### Catholic Identity and Religious Education

- Support & develop Staff Spirituality
- Consolidate our evangelising mission in the community

### Student Learning

- Supporting & promoting student
- Focus on punctuation in all classes
- Parental engagement & information.

Pedagogy

- Targeting literacy & numeracy
- Collaboration between all staff members
- Improve methods of giving regular, informative feedback to all children.

**In 2014**

We resumed the Friendship Programme which gives practical strategies to those children having issues relating to their peers. These sessions were organised and run by Catherine Healy from Centacare.

We continued AASC on Tuesdays each term, and increased the number of children attending. Extend took over OOSH and have provided a valuable service.

**Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility**

We have a regular focus on specific values such as:

- care and compassion
- doing your best
- treating people fairly
- standing up for the rights of others
- being honest and trustworthy
- acting ethically and morally and with integrity within our society
- showing respect and dignity towards others
- acting in a responsible way in regards, to their learning, playground and belongings
- taking time to understand others and being tolerant of others
- using our manners to show respect and consideration

The Buddy programme begins with the Year 5 students, and continues into Year 6 when the Kinder children commence school. We also have Peer Support Training for Year 6 which is a peer relationship program that develops and builds positive relationships and assists students in recognising the essential elements of relationships. Peer support also gives the student leaders opportunities to learn about resilience and values. The Anti – bullying messages are very sound and effective.

Children are involved in the Corowa Community through various activities such as: Corowa Festival of Fun 4 Kids; Landcare activities, Singing and performing at Karinya Southern Cross Aged care facility and participating in the ANZAC and Remembrance Day ceremonies. This

year our students have been a part of community awareness events, naming a street on the new Bike Track and being involved in tree planting.

**Community Satisfaction**

The following information has been provided to the school. It has been a valuable gauge for determining the level of satisfaction the community has with our school.

Parents

My child (son or daughter) is usually happy at St. Mary's.

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
38%	62%	%	%

Students

I am usually happy at St. Mary's.

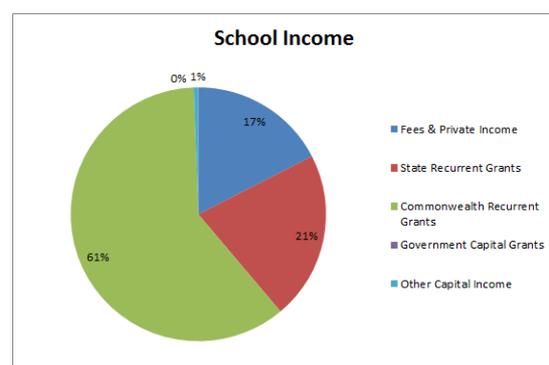
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
84%	15%	1%	%

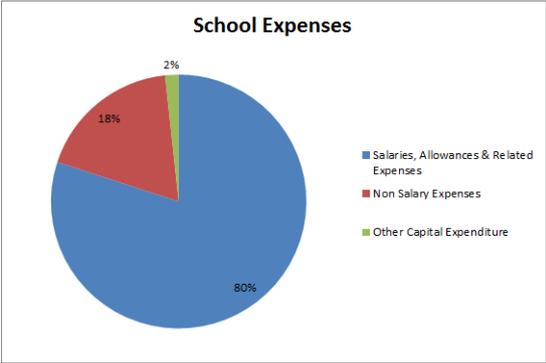
Staff

I am usually happy at St. Mary's School.

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
80%	20%	%	%

**Financial Statement Summary**





**About This Report**

Principal, staff, students and parents have been involved in compiling this report.