

St Thomas' Catholic School Willoughby

2006 Annual Report



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1. Message from Key Groups in Our School Community

1.1 Message from the Principal

It is with pleasure that I report on the 2006 school year at St Thomas' Catholic Primary School. This year has been a full and fruitful one, with St Thomas hosting the Cluster Public Speaking Finals, and initiating Year 6 student leadership days with neighbouring Catholic Schools.

There have been a number of celebratory events during the year and these have included our Beginning of the Year Mass, our Holy Week Presentation, and the annual Art and Craft Show. There has also been considerable curriculum development. In curriculum development and professional learning we have continued our focus on enquiry-based learning through an integrated curriculum, and have also introduced the Quality Teaching Framework.

As in the past an outstanding feature of the school year has been the willingness of our parent community to support the teaching and learning at St Thomas'.

Dianne Burgham, Principal

1.2 Message from the Parent Body

If asked to describe the character of St Thomas' School one phrase springs immediately to mind and that is "the sense of community" that you feel as a parent, student, teacher or visitor. St Thomas' School has grown from a small village school doubling in size over the last seven years.

This strength of character and community is evident in the various activities of the P&F and the interaction between the parents, teachers and students of the school. We welcome our new parents and celebrate with our returning parents through our New Parents Dinner Dance, Tissues and Champagne morning when the kindy children start school, and class dinners throughout the year.

In 2006 we held our 31st Annual Art and Craft Show. Through the tireless efforts of our Committee Co-ordinator and her

exceptional team we were able to raise funds which we can direct towards providing a better learning environment for our children. By working with the school's executive team the P&F have been able to improve the learning and play environment for our children and to provide additional resources for the teachers. This, combined with the efforts of the CSO in 2006, have enabled our school to continue to grow and be provided with appropriate support and facilities.

I would like to acknowledge and thank our principal and the rest of the School Executive and teachers for the dedicated care and education they give our children. I would also like to extend a vote of thanks to the Parish for the role they play in the spiritual enlightenment of our children and the generosity of time given to the preparation and presentation of the sacramental program.

My thanks go to the members of the P&F Executive, various sub-committees, class parents and all parents for their selfless contribution of time and expertise to the activities of the school and the P&F during 2006. Your efforts enrich the lives of all our children and their school experience.

I would like to wish the 2007 P&F Executive well and encourage all members of our school to continue to strengthen the St Thomas' spirit of community.

Clare Brown, P&F President 2006

1.3 Message from the Student Body

The year 2007 was a great one, really busy and filled with lots of fun and treasured memories. One of the highlights for Year 6 was the Senior Students' Camp at Challenge Ranch, Somersby, where St Thomas students mixed with senior students from St Cecilia's, Balgowlah.

Other highlights of the year included the two Year 6 leadership days, which involved the Year 6 students from St Phillip Neri, Northbridge and Our Lady Of Dolours, Chatswood. The first Leadership Day was held at St Thomas' where students spent most of the day in the newly refurbished



cottage mixing with the other students as well as listening to guest speakers, Mr Dave Borean and Constable Lyn Kennedy, and senior school students from Mercy College and St Pius X College Chatswood. It was obvious that the students present gained a lot from these experiences, in particular learning the qualities of a good leader and how to practise these.

One of the most exciting times was definitely the Year 6 graduation and students had a lot of fun putting it all together at a retreat day held at the home of two Year 6 students.

Although the day was filled with lots of swimming, laughs and fun, it played a huge part in the preparation for the graduation mass which took place on 14 December 2006.

Sarah Antico, Year 6, 2006



2. School Profile

2.1 Introduction

St Thomas' Catholic School is a co-educational primary school catering for students from Kindergarten to Year 6. It is situated on the lower North Shore of Sydney in the parish of Willoughby in the Diocese of Broken Bay. Students are drawn from the suburbs of Willoughby, Artarmon, Northbridge, Chatswood, Roseville, Naremburn, Middle Cove and Castlecrag.

The school enjoys a positive profile in the local community with a high demand for places.

As in the past an outstanding feature of the school year has been the willingness of our parent community to support the teaching and learning at St Thomas'.

2.2 Student Profile

The following information describes the student profile for 2006:

| Girls | Boys | LBOTE* | Indigenous | Total |
|-------|------|--------|------------|-------|
| 131 | 116 | 24 | 0 | 247 |

Contrary to previous years this data reflects a stabilisation in the school's enrolment figures, and can be explained by the larger than usual number of students from Year 3 and 4 students who left at the end of 2005 to take up places at private schools. The school had a healthy Kindergarten enrolment of 58 students.

2.3 Enrolment Policy

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established an Enrolments Policy which is implemented by all schools in the Diocese. The full text of this policy can be found at:

http://www.cso.brokenbay.catholic.edu.au/resources/pdfs/Policy-Enrolment_Apr2006.pdf

The implementation of this policy is monitored by the Catholic Schools Office.

2.4 Staff Profile

The school executive consists of the Principal, the Assistant Principal, the Religious Education Co-ordinator and two Co-ordinators with curriculum responsibilities.

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

- have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines
- have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications
- do not have qualifications as described in (a) or (b) but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context. Such teachers must have been employed:
 - to 'teach' in NSW before 1 October 2004 (either on a permanent, casual or temporary basis), and
 - as a 'teacher' during the last five (5) years in a permanent, casual or temporary capacity.

| a | b | c | Total |
|----|---|---|-------|
| 16 | 0 | 0 | 16 |

2.5 Teacher Attendance and Retention Rates

The average teacher attendance rate during 2006 was 92.0%. This figure does not include teachers on planned leave.

The teacher retention rate from 2005 to 2006 was 75%.



2.6 Teacher Satisfaction

The high retention rate of teachers and the willing participation in professional learning indicate a high degree of teacher satisfaction.

2.7 Student Satisfaction

The positive atmosphere in the school and the energetic involvement of student leaders in the life of the school are an indication of the high degree of satisfaction.



3. Catholic Life and Mission

3.1 Catholic Heritage

St Thomas' Catholic School commenced in 1928 when the Sisters of St Joseph from Mount Street, North Sydney were invited to staff the new school in Horsley Avenue. True to the motto of their founder, Mary MacKillop, 'Never see a need without doing something about it', they responded to the call and were a vital presence at the school until 1979. The Sisters received their teacher training at Mount Street Teachers' College, North Sydney and St Thomas' Catholic School later became one of the demonstration schools for College students.

When the school opened in 1928, the new building was used as both a school and a church. As numbers grew, plans were developed to build a new school to provide more classrooms. In 1991-92 a second major building and refurbishment project was undertaken. A major upgrade of the front playground was carried out in 2001.

The Sisters of St Joseph continued to be a presence in the school and the parish until 1979, and their charism has endured throughout the years with St Thomas' Catholic School renowned for the pastoral care and sense of hospitality which exists within the school community.

3.2 Liturgical Life

The community gathered to celebrate our faith on many occasions throughout the 2006 school year. For example:

Class Masses for Years 3-6 were celebrated most Fridays throughout each term. Years K-2 each celebrated Liturgies of the Word throughout each term. These were led by priests of the parish and parents attended in large numbers.

Twice each term a class took responsibility for participating in a special way in the 9.30am Sunday parish mass. This was always followed by a shared morning tea provided by the parents of that class.

The feast of the school's patron saint, St Thomas, was celebrated with Mass followed

by morning tea, a sausage sizzle and special activities, at the school. A planned visit to Bales Park was cancelled because of inclement weather.

Families were invited to Masses, Liturgies of the Word and presentations on a number of occasions throughout the year to mark significant dates and events in the lives of the community. These included:

- Holy Week Presentations
- Liturgies of the Word celebrating the Seasons of the Church's Year
- Liturgies of the Word (St Patrick's Day, The Annunciation, Anzac Day, Mission-Life for All, Remembrance Day)
- Whole school focus on the Rosary during October
- School Masses (St Thomas' Day, Blessed Mary MacKillop Day, Sacred Heart, Our Lady Help of Christians, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Grandparents' Day, Beginning and End of Term Masses).

As the year drew to a close the graduation of the Year 6 students was celebrated with the community at a special Graduation Mass. This was preceded by a Year 6 Retreat Day during which the children collaboratively prepared parts of their Graduation Mass. The year ended with the annual Carol Evening where Year 6 students were each presented with a Graduation Candle. A special Advent Mass at which all school leavers were acknowledged and farewelled was celebrated on the last day of the academic school year.

The school prayer is recited each week at the Monday morning assembly, fortnightly assemblies and during class prayers.

3.3 The School in the Life of the Parish and Diocese

The students and teachers of St Thomas' joined with the parishioners of St Thomas at the 9.30am Mass to celebrate the beginning of the school year on Sunday February 12.



On the fourth Sunday of each month during term time a class took responsibility for preparing the 9.30am Sunday Mass.

The parish hall was used on a weekly basis for Music and for Friday assemblies.

Children in Years 2 and 3 took part in parish programs to prepare them for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation. This was supported by school Religious Education programs.

The school joined with the parish collecting Christmas gifts and food for recently arrived refugees in the Sudanese community, and supporting the Lenten and Advent Appeals.

3.4 Religious Education Curriculum

In 2006 classroom teachers deepened their knowledge of the CSO Religious Education Modules. They were supported and supervised in this by personnel from the Mission Services team and the REC.

A revised Scope and Sequence was developed and resources were purchased to support the RE Modules.

3.5 Catholic Worldview

With a view to developing an awareness of the needs of people in third world countries, children participated in a special Liturgy of the Word following Mission Week. The particular focus was on the work of Caritas and a cake stall was held to raise money. This was led by Year 5/6 school leaders and their teacher.

Year 5 students represented the school at the annual Diocesan Mission Mass.

A presentation by Mary Rajca on the work of the Mercy Sisters with the poor of Peru was followed by a stall selling goods made by women of Peru. All monies raised was sent directly back to the community in Peru.

Year 6 students joined with Year 6 students from schools in the North Shore cluster to celebrate the annual Year 6 Cluster Mass.

All students and teachers participated in a School Clean Up to coincide with the Clean Up Australia project.

Two Year 5 students participated in Kids Congress. Their chosen topic was "Care of our Environment." One of their initiatives was to organise a school rubbish free day.

School families participated in St Vincent de Paul food and clothing appeals during the year.

3.6 Parent Participation

Parents are acknowledged as the primary educators of their children and the school ensures that they are informed and included in various aspects of the Catholic life and mission of the school. In 2006 parents were kept informed through the following activities:

- invitations to participate in school and class liturgies and celebrations;
- a presentation by one of the Information, Communication and Learning Technology Education Officers from the Catholic Schools Office at a Parents' and Friends' meeting in Term 2 to inform parents about the A to E reporting to parents ;
- regular information in weekly newsletters;
- Sunday class masses with the parish family once a month;
- invitations to fortnightly school assemblies;
- open afternoons in classrooms each term;
- twice yearly written reports on student progress;
- parent teacher interviews in Terms 1 and 2, and in Term 4 if required.

School parents were actively involved in preparing and co-ordinating a number of social events. For example: the Mother's Day Stall, the Father's Day Breakfast and the morning tea for Grandparents' Day. Throughout the year they also provided morning tea on Sunday mornings after each School and Class Mass. The Parents' and Friends' Association Pastoral Care Coordinator was very active throughout the



year organising the provision of meals, transport for those in need and constantly liaising with the principal and parish priest.

The parents of the Year 4 students organised and coordinated hospitality for the 2007 Kindergarten parents on the school's three Kindergarten Orientation mornings.

The parents of Year 1 and Kindergarten students organised the annual BBQ held after the St Thomas' Carol Evening.

3.7 Professional Learning in Catholic Life and Mission

In 2006 professional development activities in Religious Education included:

- participation in the Ministry for Teachers II course (one teacher);
- participation in the Ministry for Teachers I course (two teachers)
- completion of the Certificate of Religious Education (two teachers);
- full staff participation in the Adult Faith Formation Program. The staff covered the prerequisite unit, Catholic Worldview, and the module, Church – A Community of Disciples.

The Diocesan Policy on Professional Requirements for the Accreditation of Teachers of Religious Education can be found at:

http://www.cso.brokenbay.catholic.edu.au/resources/pdfs/Policy-Rqs_Accrd_Tchrs_RE.pdf



4. Pastoral Care

4.1 Diocesan Policies

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established Pastoral Care and Discipline Policies which are implemented by all schools in the Diocese. The full text of these policies can be found at:

http://www.cso.brokenbay.catholic.edu.au/resources/pdfs/Policy-Pastoral_Care_Oct05.pdf and

http://www.cso.brokenbay.catholic.edu.au/resources/pdfs/Policy-Student_Discipline_Policy_Oct05.pdf

The implementation of these policies is monitored by the Catholic Schools Office.

4.2 School Implementation of Diocesan Policy

Diocesan policies on Pastoral Care, Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment underpin all attention and responses to pastoral care issues at St Thomas'. In 2006 all pastoral care matters related to student welfare were discussed in confidence with caregivers, appropriate responses decided on and action taken. Records are kept in the school Discipline Book or the student file.

The St Thomas' Code of Behaviour was reviewed and amended. This was completed with input and discussion between students, staff and parents and has resulted in a greater awareness of stated consequences for individual's actions. Communication with parents of students who re-offend has had the added benefit of greater parent support and involvement.

The school continued the "Buddy" program for Kindergarten, with Year 5/6 students providing support to the Kindergarten teachers in the first few months of the new school year and establishing relationships with Kindergarten students.

Year 6 students attended a Personal Development camp at Challenge Ranch with Year 6 students from St Cecilia's School, Balgowlah which gave the senior students the opportunity to build relationships with a wider group of peers.

A very successful gold coin collection supporting children with cystic fibrosis was undertaken on the school's Open Classroom afternoon.

4.3 Pastoral Care of Families

A number of formal and informal structures exist to support families within the school community. In 2006 these included:

- access to student counselling;
- co-ordination of practical community support through the Parents' and Friends' Pastoral Care Co-ordinator.
- advice and referral to other support agencies such as Centacare.

4.4 2006 Initiatives

With the revision and amendment of the school rules that are established and known within the school community, the school continued using School Houses as a strategy for organisation in 2006. Each School House was named after a former parish priest. All students identify with their House and its Colour and work cooperatively towards being awarded house points.

A new procedure for children's lining up was introduced in 2006 with children lining up in their house groups, rather than in class lines. This proved to be a most successful initiative with students moving in a more orderly manner from the assembly area to their classrooms.

The introduction of the House Shield was also a successful initiative with the shield being presented each week to the leaders of the house team with the most points. At the end of each term the winning house was rewarded.

4.5 Resolving Issues

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established a Complaints Handling Policy which is implemented by all schools in the Diocese. The full text of this policy can be found at:

http://www.cso.brokenbay.catholic.edu.au/resources/pdfs/Policy-Complaints_Handling.pdf



The implementation of this policy is monitored by the Catholic Schools Office.



5. Excellence in Teaching and Learning

5.1 Curriculum Overview

Staff members continually seek to develop and improve the delivery of curriculum at St Thomas'.

In 2006 there was a professional development focus on developing teacher understanding and use of assessment tools and in particular learning about the A to E online reporting system.

The teachers continued to develop an integrated enquiry-based approach to children's learning where outcomes for a number of Key Learning Areas are addressed in one unit of work. This approach reinforces student learning and enables them to construct meaning and deepen their understanding of concepts in an interconnected way. Parents continued to be informed about this through newsletters and regular guided tours of classrooms.

In 2006 students with special needs continued to have their needs met through the provision of Individual Learning Programs and intensive input from the school's special needs teacher. This was achieved with support from Educational Services at the CSO. Meetings were also held with CSO Education Officers who supported and guided teachers in providing for high achieving and gifted students.

5.2 Approach to Teaching and Learning

A professional approach to the responsibilities of teaching is an important element in the mission of all Catholic schools. In 2006 staff at St Thomas' committed to a significant Broken Bay Pedagogy initiative, the Quality Teaching Framework.

In Term 1 members of the school's executive attended the three-day Broken Bay Pedagogy in Practice Conference, focussing on the Quality Teaching Framework. As a result professional learning opportunities for the staff were implemented. This was achieved through a staff development day held on 31 July 2006, which introduced

teachers to the Quality Teaching Framework, and through a number of follow up staff meetings throughout Terms 3 and 4, which deepened teacher understanding of the elements of the Quality Teaching Framework.

The Quality Teaching Framework encourages professional reflection and dialogue within a framework based on the dimensions of quality teaching, significance and supportive learning environment.

5.3 Significant Initiatives

In 2006 the importance of literacy learning in Kindergarten and Years 1 and 2 was again emphasised and all specialist classes for infants were timetabled so that they had an uninterrupted literacy block between 9am and 11am.

The online reporting format provided by the Catholic Schools Office was used by all teachers for reporting student achievement to parents. Follow up interviews were offered to all parents.

In 2006 there was an emphasis on developing teacher understanding about assessment and successful use of assessment to improve student learning. Professional development to support this initiative included a twilight inservice followed by a series of staff meetings. These were run by specialist staff from the Catholic Schools Office. As a result of this professional development teachers reviewed the school-wide mandated standardised testing and revised the written tracking of results.

5.4 Student Achievement (BST)

In 2006, 43 Year 3 and 13 Year 5 students sat the Basic Skills Tests (BST).

Literacy

The table below shows the percentage of students in Year 3 who achieved each band for overall literacy achievement both at the school and also in the state. Analysis of this data shows that 73% of St Thomas' students scored in the top two bands (Bands 4 and 5) as compared to 42% of the state.



Table 1: Percentage of St Thomas' Year 3 Students in each Skill Band for Literacy Achievement compared to State

| | School | State |
|--------|--------|-------|
| Band 5 | 35 | 14 |
| Band 4 | 38 | 28 |
| Band 3 | 25 | 32 |
| Band 2 | 3 | 19 |
| Band 1 | 0 | 8 |

Overall the 2006 Year 3 literacy scaled scores were consistent with a steady increase in scores recorded by Year 3 students at St Thomas' since 2002. The following table compares Year 3 student performance in literacy (reading and language) to statewide performance over time. Since 2002 the average scaled score for Year 3 Literacy St Thomas' has been consistently above the state performance.

Table 2: Scaled scores for Year 3 Student Performance at St Thomas' and statewide since 2002

| Year | School | State |
|------|--------|-------|
| 2002 | 54.9 | 50.6 |
| 2003 | 52.1 | 50.6 |
| 2004 | 55.4 | 50.5 |
| 2005 | 54.6 | 50.8 |
| 2006 | 55.2 | 50.7 |

The following table shows the percentage of Year 3 students in each band for writing achievement both at the school and the state.

Table 3: Percentage of St Thomas' Year 3 Students in each Skill Band for Writing Achievement compared to State

| | School | State |
|--------|--------|-------|
| Band 5 | 26 | 13 |
| Band 4 | 45 | 25 |
| Band 3 | 26 | 36 |
| Band 2 | 2 | 18 |
| Band 1 | 0 | 7 |

The following table shows the percentage of students in Year 5 who achieved each band for overall literacy achievement at the school and also in the state. Analysis of this data shows that 54 % of students scored in the top two bands as compared to 50% of the state.

Table 4: Percentage of St Thomas' Year 5 Students in each Skill Band for Literacy Achievement compared to State

| | School | State |
|--------|--------|-------|
| Band 6 | 31 | 22 |
| Band 5 | 23 | 28 |
| Band 4 | 46 | 29 |
| Band 3 | 0 | 14 |
| Band 2 | 0 | 5 |
| Band 1 | 0 | 1 |

The following table compares Year 5 student performance in literacy to statewide performance and illustrates trends in student performance over time.

Table 5: Scaled scores for Year 5 Student Performance at St Thomas' and statewide since 2002

| Year | School | State |
|------|--------|-------|
| 2002 | 58.4 | 57.8 |
| 2003 | 56.0 | 57.5 |
| 2004 | 63.1 | 57.4 |
| 2005 | 59.9 | 57.0 |
| 2006 | 60.4 | 57.3 |

The following table shows the percentage of Year 5 students in each band for writing both at the school and statewide. Analysis of the data shows that 77% of St Thomas students scored in the top two bands as compared with 51% of students in state schools.

Table 6: Percentage of St Thomas' Year 5 Students in each Skill Band for Writing Achievement compared to State

| | School | State |
|--------|--------|-------|
| Band 6 | 23 | 20 |
| Band 5 | 54 | 31 |
| Band 4 | 23 | 25 |
| Band 3 | 0 | 17 |
| Band 2 | 0 | 5 |
| Band 1 | 0 | 2 |

Numeracy

The Basic Skills Test (BST) in numeracy is used to assess student achievement in aspects of number, space, measurement and working mathematically. In 2006, 43 Year 3



and 13 Year 5 students completed the Basic Skills Test in numeracy.

The following table shows the percentage of Year 3 students who achieved in each band for overall numeracy achievement. Analysis of this data in numeracy shows that 66% of students scored in the top two skill bands as compared with 46% across the state.

Table 7: Percentage of St Thomas' Year 3 Students in each Skill Band for Numeracy Achievement compared to State

| | School | State |
|--------|--------|-------|
| Band 5 | 29 | 22 |
| Band 4 | 37 | 24 |
| Band 3 | 29 | 26 |
| Band 2 | 0 | 19 |
| Band 1 | 5 | 9 |

The following table shows the percentage of Year 5 students who achieved in each band for overall numeracy achievement. Analysis of this data shows that 84% of students were placed in the top two skill bands compared with 56% across the state.

Table 8: Percentage of St Thomas' Year 5 Students in each Skill Band for Numeracy Achievement compared to State

| | School | State |
|--------|--------|-------|
| Band 6 | 38 | 30 |
| Band 5 | 46 | 26 |
| Band 4 | 15 | 24 |
| Band 3 | 0 | 15 |
| Band 2 | 0 | 5 |

The following table compares Year 5 student performance in numeracy to state-wide performance and illustrates trends in student performance over time.

Table 9: Trends in St Thomas' Year 5 Student Performance over 5 years compared to Year 5 performance statewide

| Year | State | School |
|------|-------|--------|
| 2002 | 60.2 | 59.8 |
| 2003 | 60.0 | 60.4 |
| 2004 | 60.7 | 65.3 |
| 2005 | 60.4 | 61.4 |
| 2006 | 61.5 | 67.5 |

Learning Gain

The scores in the table below indicate the average growth achieved by students who sat for the BST in 2004 as Year 3 students and again in 2006 as Year 5 students, in literacy (reading and language), writing and numeracy at St Thomas' and for the same cohort of students in the state. The expected growth in BST scores is between 6-7. The following table indicates that this cohort of students demonstrated the expected growth in writing and numeracy but not the expected growth in literacy.

Table 10: Average Growth achieved by students who sat for the BST in 2004 as Year 3 students and again in 2006 as Year 5 students

| 2006 | School | State |
|----------|--------|-------|
| Literacy | 5 | 6.8 |
| Writing | 6 | 5.6 |
| Numeracy | 12.8 | 9.3 |

Analysis of available data reveals that:

- the average growth in numeracy achievement for boys in Year 5 was 13.5 compared with the average growth of 9.5 for Year 5 boys across the state;
- the average growth in numeracy achievement for girls in Year 5 was 12.5 compared with the average growth of 9.1 for Year 5 girls across the state.



The Commonwealth Government has developed national benchmarks that describe the minimum acceptable standards for Year 3 and 5 students for reading, writing and numeracy.

The following two tables outline the:

Percentage of Students in Year 3 who have surpassed the National Benchmarks since the school has had access to this data...

| | Reading | Writing | Numeracy |
|------|---------|---------|----------|
| 2006 | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| 2005 | 97% | 97% | 100% |
| 2004 | 100% | 100% | 95% |

Percentage of Students in Year 5 who have surpassed the National Benchmarks since the school has had access to this data...

| | Reading | Writing | Numeracy |
|------|---------|---------|----------|
| 2006 | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| 2005 | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| 2004 | 97% | 100% | 100% |

Targets for 2007

Targets for 2007 will be based on a thorough analysis of 2006 BST data alongside whole staff professional development planned for early 2007. Observation survey in Year 1 will target students at risk and provide information for explicit teaching. Informal and formal assessment will impact on teaching and learning programs as well as target individual student needs. Specific targets related to BST have been identified:

Target 1 - To increase use of assessment data to direct teaching and learning.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- providing professional development to staff on linking explicit teaching/learning strategies with student learning needs identified in standardised testing;
- refinement of school wide tracking of student achievement and mandated standardised testing.

Target 2 - To improve literacy skills across the school.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- providing professional development to staff on explicit teaching/learning strategies;

- use of outside experts to assist staff in analysing results of Basic Skills Testing and Observation Surveys, identifying student needs and developing learning programs to specifically meet needs of students;
- application of the Quality Teaching Framework to all literacy teaching.

5.5 Information, Communication and Learning Technologies (ICLT)

School commitment to enhancing learning through the use of information, communication and learning technologies continued throughout 2006 with the purchase of eight laptop computers for the use of Stage 2 students, and three digital cameras. Teachers made extensive use of the digital cameras and video cameras as tools for learning.

During 2006 staff continued to use CASTnet (an internet delivery system) and "myinternet" (an online learning environment) to support teaching and learning. A number of teachers developed Classpages which were accessible by students from home.

5.6 Professional Learning

All teachers participated in a range of professional learning activities in 2006.

Over the year, staff took part in a number of training projects and courses. These took the form of one-day inservices, after school seminars, conferences, staff development days, postgraduate study and ongoing projects. Professional learning covered a number of areas, and included:

- staff development days covering a Catholic worldview, an introduction to the Quality Teaching Framework, and review and development of school Vision and Belief Statements;
- within-school support from visiting specialists in literacy, gifted education and integrated curriculum, and assessment and reporting;
- attendance at courses and conferences on spirituality; leadership; Athena library



systems; information and communication; literacy; first aid, and women in the workplace;

- interschool training such as CPR updates;
- anaphylactic information and training;
- attendance at inservices in teacher mentoring, basic skills analysis, hearing impairment, beginning teacher issues and assessment and reporting

On a Diocesan level, staff were engaged in experiences such as:

- Athena library systems;
- CASTnet and SINA training;
- presentation of workshops at the Diocesan ICLT Learning and Teaching Conference.

One staff members also completed a course in middle management.

The average expenditure on professional learning per teacher in 2006 was \$1,880.

5.7 Extracurricular Events

Teaching and learning at St Thomas' is supported by a number of outside the classroom events. As well as events related to our Catholic character children had the opportunity to participate in the following:

- Interschool Debating
- Year 5 and 6 Camp
- Diocesan Swimming and Athletics Sports Carnivals
- Soccer, Netball and Basketball Gala Days
- K to 2 Swimming Program
- Year 3 to 6 Surf Skills Program
- St Thomas' Catholic School Festival of Public Speaking
- Year 6 Leadership Program
- Rock and Water Resilience Program
- Cluster and Diocesan Public Speaking Competition
- Diocesan Cross Country Trials.



6. Extracurricular Program

Stage Three Debating

In Terms 1 and 2, two teams of Year 5 and 6 students represented St Thomas' in the ISDA Debating Competition, at Monte St Angelo's Junior school. Two St Aloysius senior students coached the teams who performed admirably, and demonstrated increased skill levels throughout the term.

Public Speaking

Public speaking was promoted in all stages across the school. In Term 3 all students from Kindergarten to Year 6 participated in the St Thomas School's Festival of Public Speaking. Two Year 6 students then participated in the cluster's Public Speaking Finals.

Sporting Gala Days

Students from St Thomas' participated in a number of Gala Days which included swimming, cross country running, netball, basketball and soccer.

Chess Club

With the help of willing parents and a qualified chess teacher, many students from Kindergarten to Year 6 participated in weekly chess activities. These were held during lunch time once a week and were eagerly received by the students, who spent their lunch hour learning the intricacies of, and the skill involved in, the game of chess.

Surf Skills Program

Years 3 to 6 participated in a beach and surf skills program conducted at Manly Beach. It was held over a two day period in late Term 4. The program builds on, and extends, the swimming skills the students gain during previous years swimming lessons.

Band

In 2006 the school band performed at the annual St Thomas' Day celebration, Kindergarten Orientation Days, the annual Willoughby Band Festival and at the annual Christmas Carol evening in December. The band also played during the mass to celebrate the Feast of St Thomas.

Individual band members performed at various events throughout the year.

Sports Club

In 2006 the school initiated a lunchtime Sports Club which was supervised by professional Sports Consultants and a classroom teacher. The focus of the Club in 2006 was to provide an opportunity for children to learn skills of co-operation and sportsmanship within an informal, supervised setting. Seventy children regularly participated.

Italian

Throughout the year children in Years 2 to 6 participated in regular Italian lessons. This program was a collaborative initiative between the school and CoAsIt (Community Assisted Italian).

Inter-School Leadership Days

In Term 2 St Thomas Catholic School hosted a leadership day for Year 6 students of St Thomas' and two neighbouring schools. The program for the day included guest speakers, discussion groups with secondary school leaders, sports activities and a closing liturgy.

The following term Year 6 students attended a similar day at one of the neighbouring schools.



7. Strategic Initiatives

7.1 2006 Priorities and Achievements

Priorities for 2006 were:

- To introduce and use an A to E system for reporting to parents as mandated by the Federal Government.
- To embed a school wide system for recording and tracking student achievement in literacy and mathematics.
- To introduce the Quality Teaching Framework as a tool for developing pedagogy across the school and enhancing student outcomes.
- To strengthen our community's understanding of the central purpose of St Thomas' Catholic School, which is to form our students in Catholic discipleship and embed a distinctly Catholic worldview across all curriculum areas.
- To work with the parish and Catholic Schools Office in developing the cottage at 1 Horsley Avenue as an integrated learning environment where books and technology merge into a modern student-based library resource.

Whilst the above priorities were successfully achieved work will continue on using the Quality Teaching Framework as a tool for developing pedagogy; developing systems for tracking student achievement and on embedding a distinctly Catholic worldview across all curriculum areas.

7.2 2007 Priorities and Challenges

A number of priorities have been identified for attention in 2007 and these include:

- accommodating the increased enrolments, and using existing facilities creatively. In 2007 this will involve reallocation of space, movement of resources and upgrading of administration areas;
- consolidation of established systems and effective induction of all new staff and students;
- embedding the student reporting and tracking systems so that information gathered is used to assist staff in

providing pathways for improved student learning. The main strategy for achieving this will be engagement of curriculum experts to work with teachers on a one to one basis identifying student needs and developing programs to cater to student needs, as identified in school wide tracking;

- refining the system for collection and storage of annotated student work samples;
- further development of opportunities for senior students including:
 - Year 6 Leadership Days with students of neighbouring Catholic Schools;
 - regular combined sporting activities with St Philip Neri, Northbridge;
 - joint participation in Mathematics Olympiad with students of St Philip Neri, Northbridge.

In 2007 the school will undertake a comprehensive review and development process led by the Catholic Schools Office which will lead to identification of strengths and areas for development in 2008.



8. Parent Participation

8.1 Introduction

Catholic schools are a collaborative partnership between parish, school and parents. Parents at St Thomas' are an integral part of the school community and contribute to the life of the school in a variety of ways.

During 2006 many parents worked alongside teachers in the classrooms supporting student learning by helping with word processing, collaborative group work, hearing individual and group reading and helping students with editing and proof reading their work.

Open classrooms were held one afternoon towards the end of each term, giving parents and carers the opportunity to spend time talking with their child about their learning for the term. In 2006 the students were able to articulate their learning in a positive manner that resulted in positive comments from the parents.

Parents also supported the teachers and students in a practical and pastoral way by organising morning teas held after the beginning of school mass and class Sunday masses.

Across the school, groups of parents worked to make school-wide activities a community success. These included the Mother's Day stall and Father's Day breakfast.

Large groups of parents volunteered to assist at the annual swimming and athletic carnivals, and Diocesan and cluster sporting events.

All parents continued to raise funds for the ongoing purchase of resources, payment of ancillary staff and upkeep of computers, as well as contributing to the upkeep of the playground. They did this through a variety of activities including a chocolate drive and the annual Art and Craft Show.

Most families have strong identification with the school community and an authentic pastoral care system exists. This is continually demonstrated by the practical support parents and families give to each

other, particularly during times of hardship. Assistance to families in need varies and can take the form of transport provision, child minding, house cleaning, provision of meals and regular friendly contact.

8.2 Parent Satisfaction

The high involvement of parents in a variety of school activities is evidence of their satisfaction and commitment to the school.



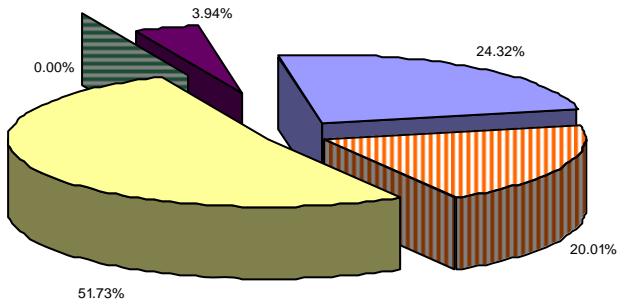
9. Financial Report

Consistent with Board of Studies requirements, financial income and expenditure for this school is shown in the graphs below.

Diocesan system financial reporting is found in the Diocese of Broken Bay Catholic Schools Office Annual Report.

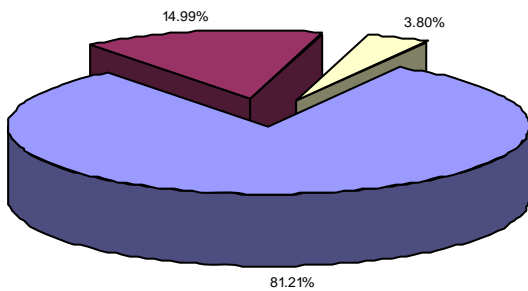
Income

- Fees and Other Private Income
- State Government Funds
- Commonwealth Recurrent Grants
- Government Capital Grants
- Other Capital Income



Expenditure

- Salaries, Allowances and Related Costs
- Non salary Expenses
- Capital Expenditure



The contents of this annual report have been validated by the School's consultant, Diann Hynes.