

St Thomas' Catholic Primary School Willoughby

2010 Annual Report



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Message from Our School Community

1.1 Message from the Principal

Our purpose as a Catholic school in the St Thomas Willoughby community is to provide an education which challenges all members of our community to reach their full potential in an environment where all feel welcomed, accepted, loved and forgiven. This is how we demonstrate God's love and share in the teaching of Jesus.

St Thomas' is well regarded in the local community for providing an excellent, well balanced education to its students and for its sense of community and pastoral care. This report provides an overview of activities and events during the 2010 school year which contributed to the achievement of our goals and the continued development of our Catholic school community. 2010 was a full and eventful year and we are proud of the broad range of our successes. These included excellent NAPLAN results, successful debating teams in the Australian Independent Schools Debating Association Competition (winning the Primary B section and being finalists in the Primary A section), sports representation at Diocesan level, and an outstandingly successful Art and Craft Show.

1.2 Message from the Parent Body

The role of the Parents and Friends Association (P&F) is to build and strengthen the partnership between family, school, parish and the wider community and to raise funds for the benefit of our children's overall development and learning. In 2010 the P&F hosted a number of events for all of its members with the aim of building a friendly and faith filled community; providing practical help and support to the principal and staff; and supporting parents and friends with their parental and pastoral care responsibilities. Achievements in 2010 included the continued funding of Athletics membership for all students, assistance with staffing costs, contributions to the cost of lunchtime clubs and co-curricular activities, reading resources, representative uniforms, the purchase of a school branded marquee and a very successful Art and Craft Show.

St Thomas Parents & Friends President

1.3 Message from the Student Body

As Year 6 school leaders in 2010 we have assisted in the smooth running of the school, leading school liturgies and supporting Kindergarten Buddies in their first year at school.

During the year we held a St Vincent de Paul Winter Sleep-in in our Parish Hall, a Great Shave Day and a coloured hair day to raise money for community causes.

A major fund-raising function held annually at St Thomas is the St Thomas Art & Craft Show. As leaders we were able to assist the caterers serving the guests.

St Thomas Year 6 School Leaders



2. School Profile

2.1 Student Profile

The following information describes the student profile for 2010:

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Indigenous	Total
157	148	29	1	305

*Language background other than English

2.2 Enrolment Policy

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established an [Enrolment Policy](#)[†] which is implemented by all systemic schools in the Diocese.

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

[†]Copies of this policy and other policies in this report may be obtained from the Catholic Schools Office website at: <http://www.csodbb.catholic.edu.au/about/index.html> or by contacting the Catholic Schools Office.

2.3 Staff Profile

The NSW government requires that this report detail 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
20	0	0	20

Further information about the staff profile can be found in the School Facts section of the school's profile page on the *My School* website.

2.4 Teacher Attendance and Retention Rates

The average teacher attendance rate during 2010 was 96%. This figure does not include teachers on planned leave.

The teacher retention rate from 2009 to 2010 was 100%.

2.5 Teacher Satisfaction

Research Australia Development & Innovation Institute made available a satisfaction survey to all staff in Term 3, 2010. Nineteen staff responded to the survey.



The staff expressed overwhelming confidence in the religious leadership of St Thomas as a school where faith is nurtured in a student centred and supportive way. Staff confidence in the use of data to guide the learning of students in Numeracy was a significant area of growth across the 2010 school year.

The survey identified some significant areas for future development including improving the development of the use of data to guide literacy learning and developing a shared understanding of effective pedagogies for learning at St Thomas.

2.6 Student Attendance and Retention Rates

Year	Average student attendance rate (%)
K	96
1	96
2	95
3	97
4	97
5	96
6	98

The average student attendance rate for 2010 was 96%.

Management of non-attendance: In order for students to reach their full potential it is of paramount importance that they attend school regularly. While it is the parents' legal responsibility under the Education Act to ensure that their children attend school regularly, our staff as part of their duty of care, monitor all absences and work in partnership with parents to support and promote the regular attendance of students. In doing so the school, under the leadership of the Principal:

- provides a caring environment which fosters in students, a sense of wellbeing and belonging
- maintains accurate records of student attendance
- implements policies and procedures to monitor student attendance and to address non-attendance issues as and when they arise
- communicates to parents and students, the school's expectations with regard to student attendance and the consequences of not meeting these expectations
- recognises and rewards excellent and improved student attendance.

School attendance records also contain information regarding student absences including reasons for absence and documentation to substantiate reasons for absences. Teachers are required to monitor non attendance diligently on a student by student basis and to bring to the attention of the Principal immediately any unexplained absences, non attendance of a chronic nature, or reasons for non attendance that cause concern. Matters of concern are referred to the Principal, the Catholic Schools Office and the relevant Department of Education and Training officer where appropriate.



Where a student is not able to attend school for a prolonged period of time due to a medical condition or illness, the school in collaboration with parents provides resources to contribute to the student's continuum of learning where possible.

The Catholic Schools Office (CSO) monitors each school's compliance with student attendance and management of non attendance on an annual basis as a minimum, as part of the system's School Review and Development processes.

2.7 Student Satisfaction

Research Australia Development & Innovation Institute made available a satisfaction survey to all students in Year 5 & Year 6 in term 3, 2010. Forty out of forty two students responded to the survey.

Data from the survey showed that students felt strongly that they had lots of opportunities to:

- Use technology,
- Be congratulated on achievements,
- Reflect on their learning and how to improve it.

The analysis of data identified that students may not identify ways in which students and teachers look after each other within the school environment.



3. Catholic Life and Mission

3.1 Catholic Heritage

The Sisters of St Joseph from Mount Street, North Sydney were the foundational teachers at St Thomas Catholic School. Their continued presence until 1979 gave the school a charism that has endured to the present day.

The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart initial formation community, which moved to Willoughby in 2005, continue to inspire and influence our school community. Their motto 'May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved! Forever!' compliments the tradition of the Sisters of St Joseph and has continued to enhance the strong partnership between school and parish.

3.2 Religious Life of the School

St Thomas liturgies are rich in tradition and are enhanced by the full and active participation of the children from Kindergarten to Year 6. Throughout the year the whole school gathers to celebrate feast days and special events in the tradition of our faith, usually in a Mass or a Liturgy of the Word. Each class has a turn to prepare one of these celebrations and to participate in a special way. The celebration of whole school masses and class masses throughout the year has provided an opportunity for each child to contribute meaningfully and respond to the call to Catholic discipleship. Rostered attendance at Friday morning Mass along with the parish community has fostered closer ties with the broader community this year.

The parish based Sacramental program is fully supported by the school, with many parents volunteering to lead groups.

The school prayer is recited each week at Monday morning assembly.

The parent community are supported through reflections each week in the school newsletter. <http://www.dbb.org.au/schools/StThomaswilloughby/>

3.3 Catholic Worldview

As a Catholic school St Thomas' seeks to strengthen a shared understanding of the central purpose of Catholic education- to build a community of disciples of Jesus. The School has maintained a commitment both within and beyond school life through involvement in the Eucharist and the traditions of the Church. Continued involvement in issues of social justice has highlighted the dignity of all and respect for human rights. A range of fundraising and educational awareness activities have supported such projects as Caritas Project Compassion, World Missions, The Bushfire Appeal, Mini-Missionaries and our local St Vincent de Paul through the Winter Sleep-In.

3.4 Professional Learning in Catholic Life and Mission

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established a policy on the [Professional Requirements for the Accreditation of Teachers of Religious Education](#), which is implemented by all systemic schools in the Diocese.

During 2010 one staff member has engaged in a Master of Educational Leadership including some courses in Theology through the Broken Bay Institute. Two staff members attended the Ministry for Teachers I course. A further staff member has completed a week long course in Mission Theology.

All staff attended a staff development day on, 'Focusing the teaching of religious education' run by an education officer from the Catholic Schools Office.



4. Pastoral Care

4.1 Diocesan Policies

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established [Pastoral Care](#) and [Student Discipline](#) Policies which are implemented by all schools in the Diocese.

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 2010 the school continued to implement the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) program through continued teaching of procedures to students, teachers and parents via staff meetings, newsletters and the PBL committee which includes parents and staff.

4.3 Pastoral Care of Families

Both formal and informal support structures for families have been implemented where necessary throughout 2010. These have included referrals for individual counselling, group programs with a special focus (eg. Seasons For Growth, Cool Kids, Quirky Kids and the school's Language Project {The Language of Pragmatics – small group sessions}),

Practical community help such as meal rosters, prayer circles, car pools, clothing and financial assistance has been coordinated by the designated Parents' and Friends' Pastoral Care Co-ordinator and the Principal. In some instances families were linked to other support agencies within the local community such as counsellors, paediatricians, psychologists and Centacare.

Parent Education programs such as Triple P, Understanding the school Pastoral Care Policy and Supporting Your Child's Literacy Development have been well attended.

4.4 Resolving Issues

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established a [Complaints Handling Policy](#) which is implemented by all schools in the Diocese.

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

4.5 Occupational Health and Safety

Each school is required to implement and comply with the Diocesan School System Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS). This system reflects the current statutory requirements for OHS and complies with the Australian Standard for OHS Management Systems. The OHSMS adopted by the CSO for Broken Bay Systemic Schools has been designed to address general health, safety and welfare matters and also to take account of specific issues that apply to school communities. The management system supports the provision of a 'safe and supportive' environment for all students as well as taking into account the health, safety and welfare of staff, visitors and contractors to the school site.

Principals, in consultation with the relevant CSO personnel, are responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with OHS legislation and for the implementation of the management system in keeping with the Catholic Schools Office's Annual OHS Plan. External OHS system audits are conducted across a sample of schools each year to validate the implementation of the management system.



5. Excellence in Teaching and Learning

5.1 Quality Teaching and Learning

The curriculum at St Thomas is underpinned by the Religious Education Curriculum which is central to student learning and is supported by a Positive Behaviour for Learning approach to student management.

In 2010 the focus for curriculum development was on Mathematics with a visiting specialist regularly meeting with a staff member to plan professional development meetings which focussed on identifying the needs of students using an individual clinical interview in the area of Mathematics.

A second major thrust in professional development focussed on the area of literacy in particular writing (grammar) and reading comprehension.

5.2 Student Achievement

Students in Years 3 and 5 sat the *National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy* (NAPLAN) in May this year. NAPLAN assessment results provide valuable information about student achievements in literacy and numeracy. Analysis of these results assists school planning and is used to support teaching and learning programs.

Several points should be noted:

- **In Year 3**, students placed in Band 1 are achieving below the national minimum standard. Students in Band 2 are achieving at the national minimum standard. Students in Bands 3 – 6 are performing at a standard deemed to be above the national minimum standard. Students in Bands 5 and 6 are “at proficiency”.
- **In Year 5** students in Band 3 are achieving below the national minimum standard. Students in Band 4 are achieving at the national minimum standard. Students in Bands 5 – 8 are performing above the national minimum standard. Students in Bands 7 and 8 are “at proficiency”.
- Students who were exempted from any test were deemed not to have met the national minimum standard in that test area and are not included in band distributions.
- State data for band distributions is sourced from the School Measurement and Reporting Toolkit (SMART), developed by NSW Department of Education and Training. All national data and state figures for the percentage at or above national minimum are sourced from the NAPLAN summary report published by the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA). All school data is sourced from SMART.
- In the 2010 cohort, there were 54 students in Year 3 and 26 students in Year 5.

Detail on school performance is provided in the following tables. Band distributions and percentages of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard are shown separately for Years 3 and 5. Additional information can also be accessed from the *My School* website (<http://www.myschool.edu.au/>).



Band Distributions (%) – Year 3

		Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6 (+)	% at or above national minimum
Reading	State	4	10	15	24	20	28	95
	National	4	10	17	23	22	22	94
	School	0	4	6	26	26	39	100
Writing	State	2	4	11	27	31	25	97
	National	2	5	13	30	30	17	96
	School	0	0	0	6	45	49	100
Spelling	State	4	9	18	24	25	21	94
	National	7	10	18	24	22	16	91
	School	0	4	13	20	37	26	100
Gr. & Punct.	State	6	9	13	19	25	29	94
	National	6	9	15	21	22	25	92
	School	2	2	6	15	24	52	98
Numeracy	State	3	12	24	22	23	15	95
	National	4	11	23	28	20	12	94
	School	0	4	24	19	39	15	100

Consistent with past years the performance of Year 3 children at St Thomas in Bands 5 and 6 was significantly higher than both the State and National results in all areas. A distinct increase in the proportion of students attaining Band 6 in Writing and Grammar & Punctuation is to be celebrated. It should be noted that in Reading a larger than expected number of students achieved Band 5. It is our aim to identify the needs of students in Bands 4 and 5 and increase students' representation in Bands 5 and 6 in 2011.

Professional development has been provided for all teachers focussing on Reading, especially the explicit teaching of comprehension through the use of the 3H strategy, reciprocal teaching and visualising and verbalising.

During 2010 significant emphasis has been placed on identifying student needs in numeracy using a clinical interview which is a response to previous years' student performance. 2011 will see an emphasis on increasing attainment in Bands 5 and 6.

Band Distributions (%) – Year 5

		Band 3 (-)	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6	Band 7	Band 8 (+)	% at or above national minimum
Reading	State	7	13	24	22	16	17	93
	National	7	14	23	25	18	10	91
	School	0	12	12	31	27	19	100
Writing	State	4	9	21	38	17	10	95
	National	5	11	27	31	17	7	93
	School	0	0	8	46	23	23	100
Spelling	State	5	11	22	27	24	12	94
	National	6	12	24	28	19	8	92
	School	0	12	12	35	27	15	100
Gr. & Punct.	State	6	11	20	18	28	17	94
	National	6	11	20	26	21	14	92
	School	0	4	12	27	35	23	100
Numeracy	State	4	12	27	25	18	14	95
	National	5	13	26	28	17	9	94
	School	0	15	23	23	31	8	100



Consistent with past years the performance of Year 5 children at St Thomas in Bands 7 and 8 was significantly higher than both the State and National scores with the exception of numeracy. A distinct increase in the proportion of students attaining Bands 7 and 8 in Reading is to be celebrated. It should be noted that in Writing a larger than expected number of students achieved Band 6 which reduced the number of students in Band 7 and 8. It is our aim to identify the cause of this and develop programs to remediate this situation for these and future students.

All Year 5 students achieved at or above the national minimum.

Professional development has been provided for all teachers focussing on Reading, especially the explicit teaching of comprehension through the use of the 3H strategy, reciprocal teaching and visualising and verbalising.

During 2010 significant emphasis has been placed on identifying student needs in numeracy using a clinical interview it is anticipated that this will result in a reduction in students' performing in Bands 4 and 5 and a subsequent increase in students in Bands 6 – 8.

5.3 Extra Curricula Activities

Teaching and learning at St Thomas' is supported by a number of outside the classroom events. These include debating, public speaking, sporting events and a variety of school based lunchtime clubs.

5.4 Professional Learning

Teachers at St Thomas are committed to preparing students for the 21st century. With this focus four staff attended the Leading Learning course, three staff attended the Literacy through Play for the Early Years Conference, eight staff attended the Origo and MANSW conferences in Numeracy Education and all staff attended two half day and two afternoon e-lit courses in Literacy Education.

School-based professional learning in 2010 has been embedded in Mathematics and literacy.



6. Strategic Initiatives

6.1 2010 Priorities and Achievements

As a result of 2010 priorities St Thomas' staff have gained competence in using the clinical interview to identify developmental needs of students in Mathematics linked to syllabus based growth points.

Programming in the area of Religious Education was identified in the 2010 school review process as having significantly developed since the previous review in 2007. This has placed St Thomas in a strong position to implement the Diocesan assessment of Religious Education in 2011.

All classes are now equipped with interactive whiteboards and banks of laptop computers. There has been an increase in the use of the interactive resources with the support of the technology support teacher who is active in classrooms. From Term 2 the e-learning room was closed due to Building Education Revolution (BER) building work.

The school Literacy Plan was reviewed by staff and implemented from Term 3. Professional learning aimed at improving student outcomes in reading comprehension and writing was provided for all staff.

6.2 2011 Priorities and Challenges

The school priorities for 2011 are to:

Increase the range of student leadership roles and initiatives within the school.

- Progressively program the learning of leadership skills from Kindergarten to Year 6.
- Define and implement leadership roles for Year 6 students.

Develop a whole school approach to student well-being.

- Identify student perceptions of well-being.
- Develop a committee to process and respond to data collected from students.
- Develop strategies to empower teachers and students to provide a nourishing and safe environment for all at St Thomas.

Inform the learning and teaching of numeracy through teacher and support staff understanding and use of clinical interviews to identify learning needs of students.

- Continue developing staff confidence in the use and analysis of clinical interviews.
- Develop programming in numeracy which reflects student needs as identified by the clinical interview data for each class.



7. Parent Participation

7.1 Introduction

Parents are the first educators of children and this special role is acknowledged by the school as we build on the work of parents. There is a long tradition of parent involvement in the school community at St Thomas and this is supported by frequent communication between staff and parents, both formally and informally.

Throughout 2010 parents gave generously of their time to support school initiatives, run functions, and to assist teachers.

The P&F worked tirelessly to support the principal and the staff, organising a number of functions to encourage community building, including the annual Art and Craft Show which is the major fundraising event for the school.

Parent literacy helpers were trained through participation in a four week course in Term 2, 2010.

Additional information can be found on our website at www.dbb.org.au/schools/stthomaswilloughby

7.2 Parent Satisfaction

Research Australia Development & Innovation Institute made available a satisfaction survey to all parents in Term 3, 2010. One hundred and eight parents responded to the survey.

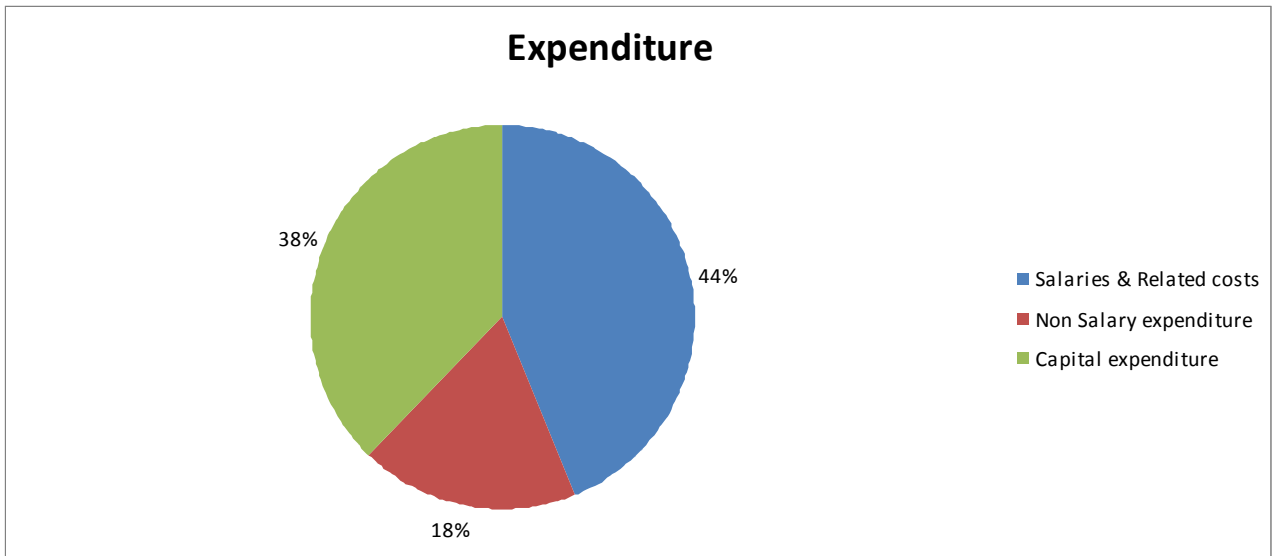
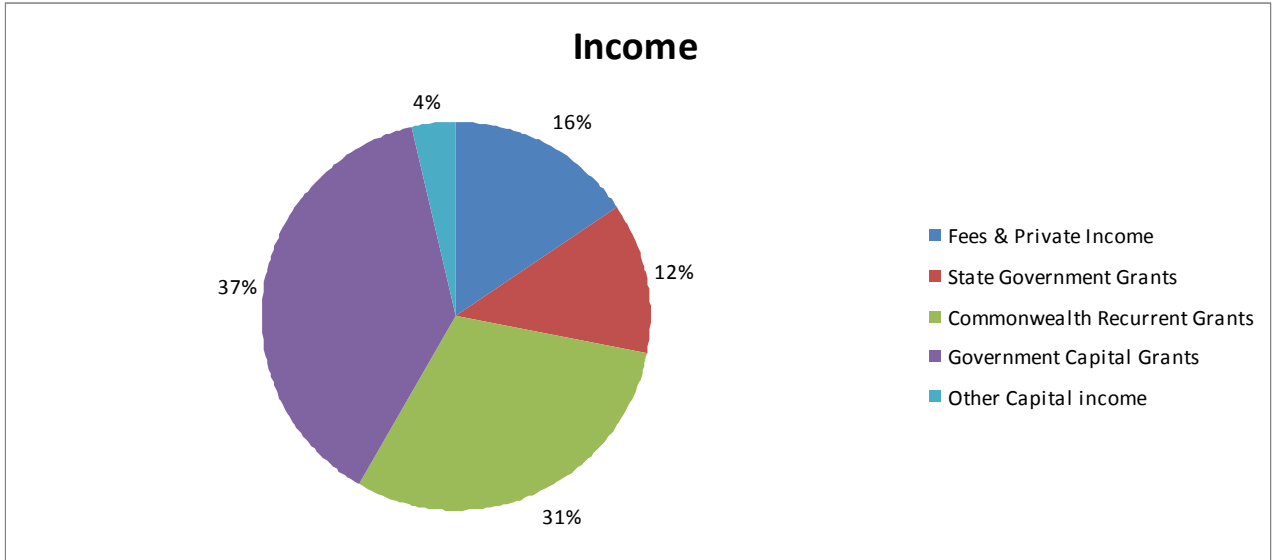
Parents expressed a very high degree of satisfaction in the school's provision of a sound faith filled and respectful environment for students and families although data indicated that further work needs to be carried out in reaching out to families who do not currently participate in the faith community.

In the area of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning parents indicated high levels of satisfaction with staff use of data to inform learning, delivery of literacy and numeracy education and the use of technology in the provision of education. Data indicated that further work needs to be done to make public the many programs provided by the school to meet the diverse needs of students and to identify areas in which parents feel improvements could be made.



8. Financial Report

Consistent with Board of Studies requirements, financial income and expenditure for this school is shown in the graphs below. More detailed financial data is available on the "myschool" website at <http://www.myschool.edu.au>. Diocesan system financial reporting is found in the Diocese of Broken Bay Catholic Schools Office Annual Report at <http://www.csodbb.catholic.edu.au/resources/annrep.html>



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