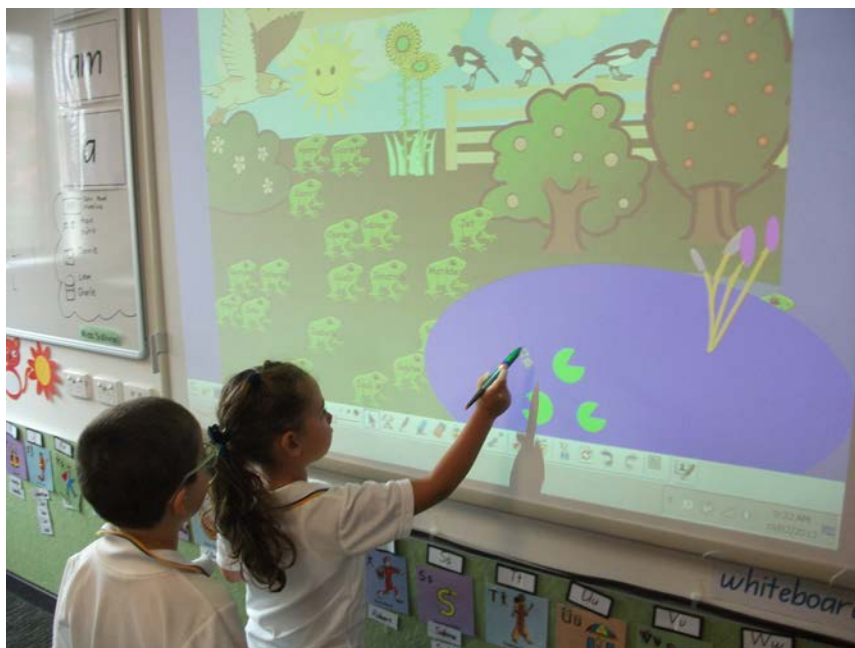




# St Thomas' Catholic Primary School Willoughby

## 2012 Annual Report



Principal: Mrs Jenny McKeown

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## **1. 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 2012 school year which contributed to the achievement of our goals and the continued development of our Catholic school community. 2012 was a full and eventful year and we are proud of the broad range of our successes. Our Project Based Learning in Years 5 and 6 created an inspiring and motivating learning environment, rich with technology. These included excellent NAPLAN results, successful debating teams in the Australian Independent Schools Debating Association Competition, sports representation at Diocesan level and an outstandingly successful Art and Craft Show.

### **1.2 Message from the Parent Body**

In 2012 the St Thomas' School Parent Community continued their collaboration with the Principal and staff to provide additional resources, activities and support for the School and our children.

A combination of the funds raised through P and F levies, and the tireless efforts of the volunteers at the annual Art and Craft show enabled the school community to help the School purchase fifty two computers, two new data projectors, upgrading the Year 5 and Year 6 demountable, purchasing new Literacy resources and installing purpose built in cupboards which to store them as well as general refurbishment of the school grounds.

The Parents and Friends also continues to fund or subsidise the annual Tissues and Champagne morning, Welcome Back / New Parent Function, Mothers' and Fathers' Day breakfasts and the School Disco.

The Parents and Friends Committee is committed to working in partnership with the School to provide the necessary support in order to generate resources and foster enriched learning environments for our children now and future children of the school.

*President of the Parents and Friends Committee*

### **1.3 Message from the Student Body**

As school leaders in 2012, Year 6 have had lots of opportunities to provide models of leadership for the community. Last year we were given ideas to expand the leadership roles we have by the previous Year 6. We have included all of their ideas and many of our own and feel that the leadership roles are now very comprehensive.



## 2. School Profile

### 2.1 Student Profile

The following information describes the student profile for 2012:

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Indigenous	Total
152	157	38	0	309

\*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
21	0	0	21

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 2012 was 95%. This figure does not include teachers on planned leave.

The teacher retention rate from 2011 to 2012 was 90%.

### 2.5 Teacher Satisfaction

During Term 4 the staff were surveyed regarding the 2012 year and uniformly expressed satisfaction with the professional development to meet the School Improvement Goals.

Evaluation of the School Improvement Goals for 2012 by the whole staff indicated a high level of incorporation of new learning into professional practice and an increased involvement of each staff member in the corporate life of the school.



## 2.6 Student Attendance and Retention Rates

Year	Average student attendance rate (%)
K	95
1	97
2	91
3	97
4	92
5	96
6	97

The average student attendance rate for 2012 was 95%.

**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 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

Year 6 students leaving St Thomas' at the end of 2012 were asked about their schooling experience. They were asked to rate the work the school had done to prepare them for high school in terms of knowledge, skills and social education. Seventy per cent of the responses were of the highest support, with a further twenty per cent ticking the next category of support on the scale.

In written comments, some of these students made mention of the care and attention they received from particular teachers over the years. Also noted by students were the opportunities to lead the school in care for self, others and the environment, sport, technology, liturgy, library and pastoral care. Many made a special mention of the chance to engage in Project Based Learning in Stage 3.



### **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. They continued their presence until 1979. The school has initiated a revival of the charism left by the Sisters. A visit to Mary MacKillop Place in North Sydney started the process. This will be ongoing in 2013.

#### **3.2 Religious Life of the School**

St Thomas' holds liturgies that 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 Grade 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. Attendance at Friday morning Mass along with the parish community has fostered closer ties with the broader community this year. Each grade attends a Sunday Mass as a Grade once a year and is actively involved in the preparation, participation and celebration of that Mass.

The parish based Sacramental program is fully supported by the school. The school prayer is prayed each week at Monday morning assembly.

The parent community is supported through reflections each week in the school newsletter.

#### **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, Catholic Mission, Mini-Missionaries, the Greatest Shave, St Vincent de Paul Christmas hampers and winter appeals. In 2012 a special outreach program continued with Wadeye, a remote Aboriginal community. Teachers, parents and staff and our priests have been able to visit Wadeye and both the school and local businesses have been able to fundraise to support both the Children's centre and the Women's centre in Wadeye.

#### **3.4 Professional Learning in Catholic Life and Mission**

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established an [Accreditation Policy for Staff in the Diocesan School System in respect to the Mission of the Church](#) which is implemented by all systemic schools in the Diocese.

During 2012 one staff member attended an information evening for prospective Religious Education Co-ordinators.

All staff attended a staff development day run by Mission Services, CSO, focusing on the development of adult spirituality. The day focused on the Ignatian Examen as a way to introduce reflective prayer to the school. During 2012 a Religious Education Committee was established for the first time. The main achievement of this committee was to develop a Policy for Religious Education in collaboration with staff and parents. Praying the Examen became part of the policy and every class uses this prayer form at least once a week from Kindergarten to Year 6.



## 4. Pastoral Care

### 4.1 Diocesan Policies

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established [Pastoral Care](#) and [Student Discipline](#) Policies including Student Welfare and Anti-Bullying, 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 2012 the school continued to implement the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) program through 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 2012. These have included referrals to individual counselling, group programs with a special focus (e.g. 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 co-ordinated 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.

Surveying data generated in 2012 has been used to organise and resource the Pastoral Care School Improvement Goal so that professional learning and community involvement can commence day one in 2013.

### 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 2012, the focus on improving teaching and learning was aligned with the Annual Goals of the St Thomas' School Improvement Plan. The focus for curriculum development was on Numeracy with the Mathematics co-ordinator, Principal and staff from the Catholic Schools Office planning and presenting professional development which focused on identifying the needs of students using the clinical interview in the area of Number in Mathematics. Over a series of staff meetings and staff development days as well as follow up training in conducting Diagnostic Interviews in the Number Strand of Mathematics, each teacher plotted students according to the growth points. Guidance was also provided in programming, grouping students and sharing teaching and learning activities to assist conceptual understanding and progress to the next growth point. The emphasis of the professional learning was on developing differentiated tasks with a strong emphasis on point of need teaching.

In 2012 Project-based learning has continued in Years 5 and 6 and has provided the students with many valuable opportunities to learn in a challenging, co-operative and stimulating learning environment. The programme provides the students with diverse opportunities to engage in real life learning and present this in various mediums, including film making, use of various technologies, building of models as well as spoken and written texts. Project-based learning also provides opportunities to meet the diverse needs of students and for them to be challenged to extend their learning including the skills required to gather, organise and present their learning.

### 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 (SMART2), 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 (Preliminary Results for Achievement) published by the Australian Curriculum,





Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). All school data is sourced from SMART2. Because figures are rounded and exempted students are not included in Band distributions, percentages may not add up to 100.

- In the 2012 cohort, there were 55 students in Year 3 and 23 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 *MySchool* 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
<b>Reading</b>	State	3.5	10.1	15.6	20.6	23.8	26.4	94.8
	National	4.5	9.3	15.7	21.5	21.5	25.5	93.5
	School	0.0	0.0	11.1	13.0	29.6	46.3	100
<b>Writing</b>	State	1.7	5.0	13.8	22.3	41.3	15.9	96.3
	National	2.7	4.9	13.7	30.0	31.9	14.8	95.3
	School	0.0	0.0	5.5	9.1	49.1	36.4	100
<b>Spelling</b>	State	3.4	7.5	13.4	25.4	20.2	30.1	95.5
	National	4.0	8.9	17.5	23.8	22.1	21.8	94.0
	School	0.0	0.0	9.1	23.6	25.5	41.8	100
<b>Gr. &amp;Punct.</b>	State	5.1	7.4	12.7	19.0	22.0	33.7	94.6
	National	5.0	8.0	14.4	21.1	22.1	27.5	93.0
	School	0.0	1.8	1.8	14.5	20.0	61.8	100
<b>Numeracy</b>	State	3.8	9.3	20.2	27.8	21.2	17.7	95.0
	National	4.2	11.4	21.7	27.4	20.9	12.5	93.9
	School	0.0	1.8	5.5	40.0	21.8	30.9	100

100% of students in Year 3 from St Thomas' achieved above the state and national minimums in all areas of NAPLAN. These results are indicative of the students high levels of skills in these areas as well as the school's focus on ongoing assessment and ensuring that teaching and learning is planned to meet the specific needs of the students.

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. There was a significant proportion of students attaining Band 5 and 6 in all areas and students performance continues to be strong in comparison to state and national averages and these consistent results are to be celebrated. It should be noted that in Grammar and Punctuation a larger than expected number of students (61.8%) achieved Band 6. It is our aim to identify the needs of students in Bands 3 and 4 and continue to increase students' representation in Bands 5 and 6 in 2013.

A major professional development focus during 2012 was in the area of Numeracy. The Numeracy results validated an improvement in student achievement with 92.7% of the Year 3 cohort achieving Bands 4, 5 and 6, with the percentage of students achieving well above the national and state minimums. The focus on Numeracy continues in 2013 and the representation in the higher bands should continue to rise.



## Band Distributions (%) – Year 5

		Band 3 (-)	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6	Band 7	Band 8 (+)	% at or above national minimum
<b>Reading</b>	State	7.7	10.0	22.8	24.5	21.5	13.6	93.1
	National	6.2	11.6	22.1	26.5	19.5	11.9	91.8
	School	4.3	0.0	21.7	26.1	39.1	8.7	96
<b>Writing</b>	State	5.5	8.4	34.1	28.8	14.5	8.7	93.8
	National	5.8	12.6	30.1	30.1	14.1	5.3	92.2
	School	4.3	4.3	26.1	34.8	17.4	13.0	96
<b>Spelling</b>	State	3.8	11.3	17.9	26.1	24.5	16.5	94.4
	National	5.4	11.7	22.2	27.1	20.3	11.3	92.6
	School	0.0	8.7	21.7	17.4	30.4	21.7	100
<b>Gr. &amp;Punct.</b>	State	7.8	12.8	20.8	23.5	14.5	20.7	92.3
	National	7.6	12.5	22.0	25.0	17.9	13.0	90.4
	School	4.3	0.0	17.4	21.7	8.7	47.8	96
<b>Numeracy</b>	State	5.2	11.8	23.9	28.0	15.4	15.8	94.7
	National	4.6	13.5	25.7	27.5	17.1	9.6	93.4
	School	0.0	0.0	13.0	34.8	26.1	26.1	100

100% of students in Year 5 from St Thomas' achieved above the state and national minimums in the areas of Spelling and Numeracy. In the areas of Reading, Writing and Grammar and Punctuation 96% were above state and national minimums. These results are indicative of the high levels of student skills in these areas as well as the school's focus on ongoing assessment and ensuring that teaching and learning is planned to meet the specific needs of the students.

There was a marked increase in the proportion of students attaining Bands 7 and 8 in Numeracy. This trend will hopefully continue due to the significant ongoing emphasis on professional development in the area of Numeracy.

Although there is a very small representation of students in Bands 3 or 4 (in aspects of Literacy), this representation is well below the state and national minimums. These students will continue to be monitored and supported in their learning.

Whilst these results are pleasing and place the school in a strong position when compared to like schools, as a school community we are committed to the ongoing analysis of NAPLAN results to acknowledge and celebrate strategies that are successful, as well as inform areas of need.

### 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 whole school professional development has covered assessment of number skills in Numeracy, planning learning for differentiated needs in Numeracy and teaching for improved inferential comprehension.

Implementing Information Technology across the Key Learning Areas has been a professional learning and mentoring focus this year.



## 6. Strategic Initiatives

### 6.1 2012 Priorities and Achievements

The school priorities for 2012 were to:

- unpack the Charism of our founding Order on which to build student leadership;
- improve the performance of students K – 6 in the Number strand; and
- develop a whole school approach to student well-being in line with the CSO Pastoral Policy.

During 2012 our leadership team established a productive relationship with the Sisters of St Joseph based at North Sydney which has facilitated the planning of a comprehensive professional learning agenda for us for 2013. The Stage 3 teachers have also developed a project for the students to work on which will resource all of the classes K-6 in Term 3 when they commence learning about what it means to be a Josephite school.

Throughout 2012 staff engaged in professional learning and commenced differentiating the student work in the Number strand. In 2013 this work will be consolidated by our involvement in the Extending Mathematical Understanding project through the Catholic Schools Office.

Working with Catholic Schools Office staff during 2012 has ensured that St Thomas' is in a very good position to commence work in the Well-being area with a combined 'KidsMatter' staff development day on Day One of 2013. Work is also underway to facilitate well-being input from leaders in the field with the broader parish community through shared evening functions.

### 6.2 2013 Priorities and Challenges

The school Priorities for 2013 are to:

- improve the students understanding of the Charism of our founding Order to build student leadership;
- improve student wellbeing through embedding, as cultural practice, class meeting to discuss matters and act upon issues of student well-being through the lens of 'KidsMatter';
- administer the MAI and analyse class data in order to improve the performance of all children as measured on the MAI; and
- Improve Spelling results in NAPLAN by an average of 10 points, as well as improve results in Reading Comprehension in NAPLAN by an average of 10 points.



## **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 2012 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 three week input course in Term 2.

### **7.2 Parent Satisfaction**

The school received a number of congratulatory comments via email on the NAPLAN results. Parents expressed satisfaction with the way the school was progressing with an emphasis on the development of the site and the educational focus which has been pursued by the school staff.

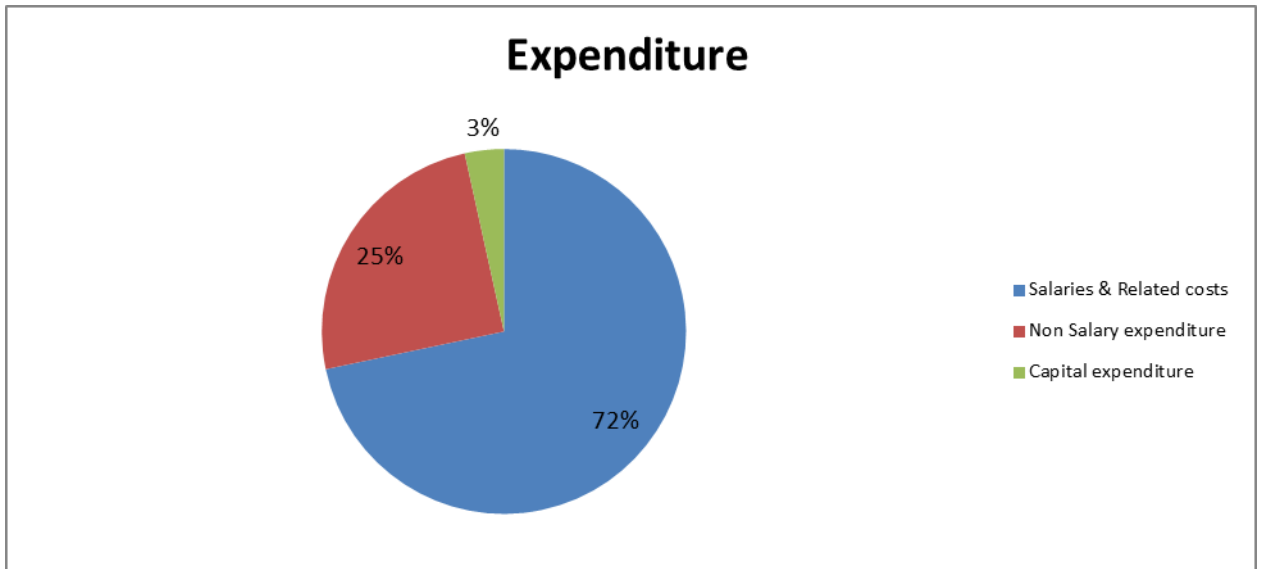
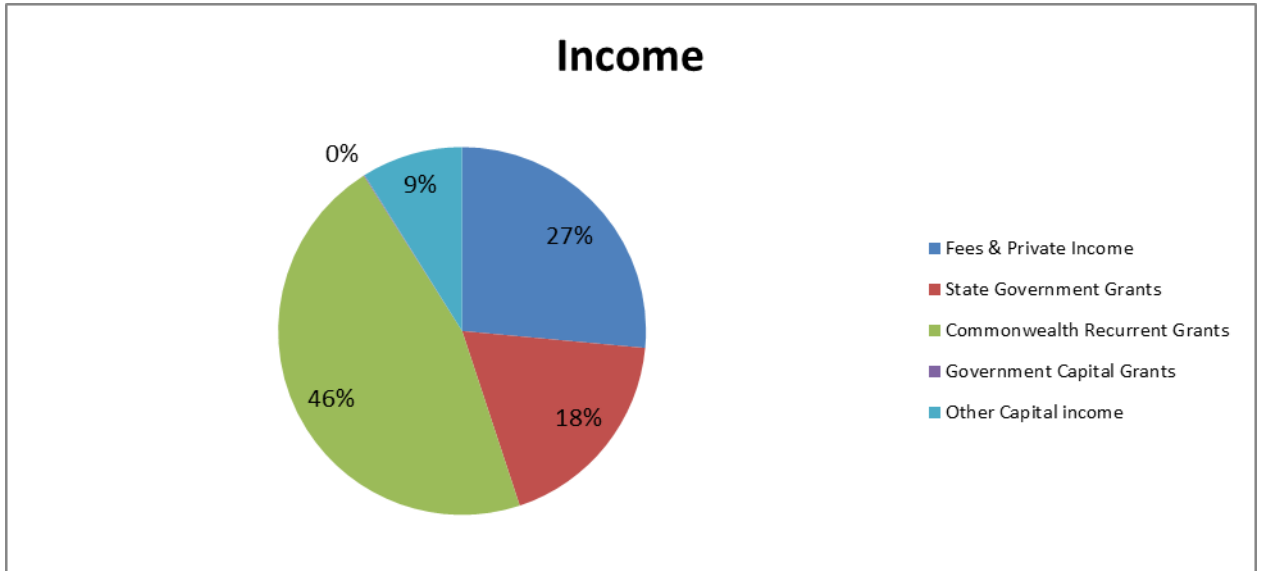
The change in curriculum delivery in Stage 3 and the high use of technology for all students has continued to result in significant positive feedback from parents and students alike. This has had a significant impact on the planned retention of boys at St Thomas' for Years 5 and 6.

The enrolment at St Thomas' has continued to grow which is a vote of confidence in the work being done by the staff and parents.



## 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 can be found in the Diocesan school system Annual Report, which will be available at <http://www.csodbb.catholic.edu.au>



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