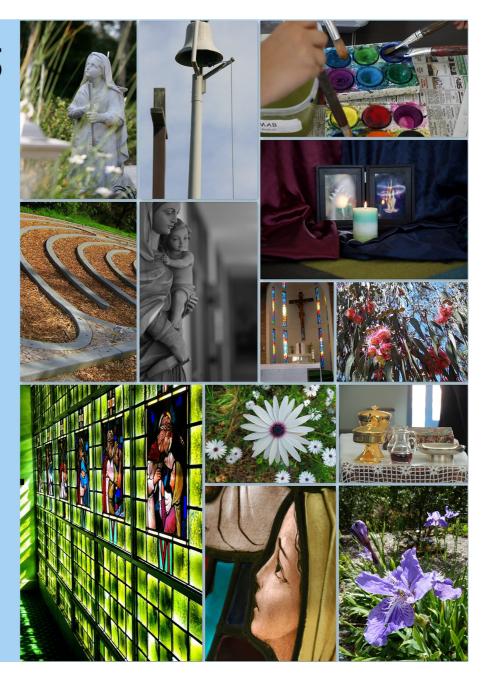
# 2015 annual school report





# St Thomas' Catholic Primary School,

## Willoughby

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### ABOUT THIS REPORT

St Thomas' Catholic Primary School (the 'School') is registered by the NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) and managed by the Catholic Schools Office (CSO), Diocese of Broken Bay. The CSO as the 'approved authority' for the diocesan registration system formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act (1990), is responsible for monitoring the compliance of member schools in the manner that has been approved by the Minister of Education.

The Annual School Report (the 'Report'), approved by the School's Consultant, demonstrates accountability to regulatory bodies and the CSO. Additionally, the Report complements and is supplementary to other forms of regular communication to the School community regarding initiatives, activities and programs which support the learning and wellbeing of its students.

The Report provides parents and the wider community with fair, reliable and objective information about educational and financial performance measures as well as School and system policies. This information includes summary contextual data, an overview of student performance in state and national assessments, a description of the achievement of priorities in the previous year and areas for improvement. Detailed information about the School's improvement journey is documented in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) which is developed, implemented and evaluated in consultation with key stakeholders.

Further information about the contents of this Report may be obtained by contacting the School directly or by visiting the School's website. Information can be also be obtained from the My School website.

### SECTION ONE: MESSAGE FROM KEY GROUPS IN OUR COMMUNITY

### Principal's Message

The purpose of St Thomas Catholic School, Willoughby is stated in our Mission Statement: To

educate and form students in Catholic discipleship by creating a place where students

- grow in their relationship with God
- strive for excellence in the development of the whole person in the context of contemporary life
- reach out through service to others.

The School is well regarded in the local community as providing an excellent, well balanced education for students and for its sense of community and pastoral care.

This report provides an overview of activities and events during the 2015 school year which contributed to the achievement of our goals and the continued development of our Catholic school community.

2015 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 Independent Schools Debating Association and Sydney Debating Network Competitions, sports representation at State level, and an outstandingly successful Art and Craft Show.

The thoughtful ongoing implementation of technology to maximise engagement and learning has been a notable success at the School.

### Parent Body Message

2015 proved to be another productive year for the Parents & Friends Association (P&F), which continued in its support of the whole school community. The P&F delivered on its objective to develop a strong school community and foster the relationship between the parents, the School and the Parish as a whole. This was evident at a number of functions including the *Tissues & Champagne* morning tea, Mother's Day and Father's Day breakfasts and Masses and the Grandparents' Day open classrooms, Mass and morning tea.

The P&F Executive conducted a survey of the parent body to identify areas for future focus. This was well supported by parents with the data analysed by the committee and Principal with recommendations for future actions presented to the school community through the newsletter and P&F meetings.

### Student Body Message

This year has been a very exciting year for Year 6 as school leaders. The School Student Representative Council (SRC) has worked well with two meetings each term and input from every class at each meeting. All students had opportunities to contribute through class meetings. Concerns raised focussed on any need classes had seen in the school community. These needs were then problem solved by the SRC leading to solutions and action to be taken being agreed upon. Each class representative went back to their class and reported on the outcome of the meeting.

Initiatives were put in place by the Social Justice Team to raise money for our sister parish in Letefoho Timor Leste, Giant Steps, Children's Cancer Research, Catholic Mission and CARITAS Australia. In addition to this, we have hosted the author Aaron Blabey, The Australian Opera which performed *Cinderella* and the Sydney Kings Basketball Team.

### SECTION TWO: School Features

### **School Features**

St Thomas' Catholic Primary School Willoughby, is a Catholic systemic co-educational school.

The School provides for the educational needs of children from Kindergarten to Year 6 and draws its enrolments primarily from the Willoughby Parish of the Lower North Shore. The School is set in an attractive setting with a challenging and stimulating outdoor play environment including large areas of natural and constructed shaded play spaces.

The School was founded by the Sisters of Saint Joseph in 1928 and the School's recently developed vision statement draws on the Josephite Charism: *St Thomas' Catholic School, Willoughby, exists to educate and form students in Catholic discipleship by creating a place where students: grow in their relationship with God; strive for excellence in the development of the whole person in the context of contemporary life; and reach out through service to others.* 

The School's rich and broad curricula offers a diverse Creative Arts program including senior and junior bands and choirs, instrumental tuition, biannual whole school musical, inter-school debating and a variety of competitive and experiential sporting events. Students debate for Monte Sant' Angelo College, North Sydney in the Primary A and Primary B divisions of competitions where primary teams are a prerequisite of inclusion. The School's Primary B team won both the Independent Schools Debating Association and the Sydney Debating Network competitions this year. Lunch clubs include double dutch skipping, chess, library and sport provide additional stimulation for all grades.

*Challenge Based Learning* is the method of curriculum delivery in our upper primary grades. The School provides technology rich, real world, long term problem solving opportunities across a wide range of skill areas to engage students in their learning.

### SECTION THREE: STUDENT PROFILE

### Student Enrolment

Students attending the School come from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities. The following information describes the student profile for 2015. Additional information can be found on My School website.

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Total Students	
172	175	62	347	

\* Language Background Other than English

Enrolments have grown each year with 2015 being no exception. The retention rate for boys in Years 5 and 6 has steadily increased which has coincided with community confidence in the School being able to offer a progressive education well suited to boys in these senior years.

### **Enrolment Policy**

The School follows the *Enrolment Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools*. The policy encourages the local Catholic community, under the leadership of the parish priest and principal, to look upon the time of enrolment as a potential occasion for ongoing evangelisation. The policy calls upon parents to examine their present faith commitments, to develop their role as prime educators of their children in faith and to immerse themselves in the communal, liturgical, ministerial and service dimensions of the parish. Copies of this policy and other policies in this Report may be obtained from the CSO website or by contacting the CSO.

### **Student Attendance Rates**

The average student attendance rate for the School in 2015 was 94.72 %. Attendance rates disaggregated by Year group are shown in the following table.

Attendance rates by Year group						
Kindergarten	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
95 %	95 %	95 %	95 %	96 %	92 %	95 %

### Managing Student 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 NSW Education Act (1990) 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 nonattendance 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 CSO and the relevant Department of Education 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 CSO monitors each school's compliance with student attendance and management of non-attendance as part of the system's School Review and Development (SRD) processes. The School's attendance monitoring procedures are based on the *Guidelines for the Management of Student Attendance in the Broken Bay Diocesan Schools System* (password required).

### SECTION FOUR: STAFFING PROFILE

### **Staffing Profile**

The following information describes the staffing profile for 2015:

Total Teaching Staff*	Total Non-Teaching Staff	Combined Total
21	5	26

\* This number includes 12 full-time teachers and 9 part-time teachers.

### **Teacher Standards**

The NSW government requires that this Report detail the number of teachers in particular categories. The following table sets out this information. Further information about can be obtained from the My School website.

	Teacher Qualifications		
1	Those having formal qualifications from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	21	
2	Those having graduate qualifications but not a formal teaching qualification from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	0	

### **Professional Learning**

The ongoing professional development of each staff member is highly valued. Professional learning (PL) can take many forms including whole school staff days, subject specific in-services, meetings and conferences and a range of professional learning programs provided by the CSO. The School takes responsibility for planning, implementing, evaluating and tracking staff professional learning. Individual staff members take responsibility for their ongoing professional development. All teachers have been involved in professional learning opportunities during the year related to improving student outcomes. The following table provides specific information relating to the focus of three of these staff development days.

Day 1	Implementing the English K-6 Syllabus at the School - Refining programming
Day 2	Gifted & Talented Education - Data, Analysis & Models of enrichment
Day 3	Prayer in the life of the School - Prayer forms, prayer through music and art

Extensive professional development was engaged in across the staff including:

- three staff members were studying for their *Graduate Certificate in Religious Education* through the University of Newcastle
- eight staff members completed a 24 hour course in *Grammar and Teaching* through the

Primary English Teaching Association Australia (PETAA)

- two staff members completed the four day *Positive Partnerships Course* (supporting school aged children on the Autism Spectrum) and provided two staff meetings to inform all staff of their learnings
- one staff member was trained as an *Extending Mathematical Understanding* (EMU) middle years specialist.

### SECTION FIVE: MISSION

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Broken Bay exist to educate and form young people in Catholic Discipleship; offering them experiences of following Jesus as members of the Catholic community. Mission is therefore core to all the priority areas of our schools. The Broken Bay K-12 Religious Education Curriculum was launched in 2005 by Bishop David Walker. This curriculum provides teachers with the opportunity to develop engaging and challenging learning experiences for their students and is comprised of three sections: (i) foundations (ii) syllabus (iii) modules. A distinctive feature of the syllabus is a statement of the Catholic Worldview that is integral to all that we do. It provides insights on the purpose of the Christian life and how we live it.

The Sisters of St Joseph from Mount Street, North Sydney were the foundational teachers at the School. Their continued presence until 1979 gave the School a charism that is still alive today. Therefore, St Mary MacKillop has a special place in the School's ethos and her feast day is celebrated every year.

The School has a rich liturgical and educational program for all students, staff and the community. Throughout the year the School gathers to celebrate feast days and special events in the tradition of our faith. Each grade has an opportunity to prepare one of these Masses or liturgies and to participate in a more active way. The celebration of whole School Masses and class Masses throughout the year provides opportunities for each child to contribute meaningfully through these celebrations and to respond to the call for Catholic Discipleship. The opening School Mass and grade Masses are held on Sundays, while others are held on Thursdays (such as Grandparent's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day and so on). Attendance at weekday Masses with the Parish, to enable students to understand the different ways in which Mass can be celebrated, is also a feature.

Environmental teams, liturgical teams and social justice teams are among the varied roles for leadership in Year 6, as well as opportunities for student voice to be heard and acted upon through the SRC with representatives from Kindergarten to Year 6 led by the School Captains.

The Parish based Sacramental program is fully supported by the School, with many parents volunteering to lead groups. The School prayer is prayed on a regular basis and the Ignatian Examen is practised to help students to identify their own relationships with God and others.

All staff are encouraged and supported to extended their religious and theological knowledge through further education. The School engages staff in ongoing adult faith formation through spiritual retreat days and staff meetings; and offer parent prayer (led by a parent) on a Monday morning each week after school assembly. The parent and Parish community are also invited to spiritual retreat days held twice a year on the School premises with free child minding offered.

### **Primary Curriculum**

The School provides an educational program based on, and taught in accordance with the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) syllabuses for primary education. The Key Learning Areas (KLAs) are English, Mathematics, Science and Technology (S&T), Human Society and its Environment (HSIE), Creative Arts (CA) and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE). In addition to this, the School implements the Diocesan Religious Education syllabus. Staff members are committed to continuous improvement of teaching and learning in all facets of the curriculum.

In 2015 the School implemented the new NSW syllabus for the Australian Curriculum in Science and Technology. The preliminary work in familiarising staff with the new NSW syllabus for the Australian Curriculum in History was commenced in Term 4. In 2016 Catholic Schools Office staff will further support the process of unit writing and teaching.

### SECTION SEVEN: STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN TESTS AND EXAMINATIONS

### NAPLAN

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an annual assessment for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. NAPLAN assessment results provide valuable information about student achievements in literacy and numeracy. An analysis of these results assists the School's planning and is used to support teaching and learning programs.

The tables below show the percentages of students who achieved particular skill bands in the aspects of literacy and numeracy compared to students nationally. Literacy is reported in four content strands (aspects): Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation. Numeracy is reported as a single content strand. 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. Additional NAPLAN student performance information can also be accessed from the My School website.

NAPLAN RESULTS 2015		% of students in the top 2 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	Australia	School	Australia
	Grammar and Punctuation	81.60 %	52.20 %	4.10 %	10.70 %
	Reading	79.60 %	48.20 %	6.10 %	11.00 %
Year 3	Writing	81.30 %	46.80 %	0.00 %	7.40 %
5	Spelling	63.30 %	41.20 %	4.00 %	14.80 %
	Numeracy	59.20 %	33.50 %	6.10 %	15.00 %

NAPLAN RESULTS 2015		% of stude top 2		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	Australia	School	Australia
	Grammar and Punctuation	62.00 %	35.90 %	0.00 %	16.60 %
	Reading	44.80 %	33.50 %	6.90 %	18.10 %
Year 5	Writing	41.30 %	19.10 %	6.90 %	17.60 %
	Spelling	58.60 %	32.60 %	0.00 %	15.30 %
	Numeracy	62.00 %	27.80 %	0.00 %	15.80 %

### **NAPLAN Comments**

Analysis of 2015 NAPLAN data indicated a number of key strengths while also assisting in the

identification of future directions for growth.

Although the School's trend data, using the statistical mean, shows some minor cohort-driven fluctuations over the past 5 years, the results remain well above Diocesan and State levels and continue to grow. Significant growth has occurred in the number of students achieving Band 6 results in Year 5 spelling and numeracy and Year 3 grammar and punctuation and numeracy. Increased representation in the top bands and improved individual student growth from Year 3 to Year 6 can be attributed to the development across the School of quality data collection, analysis and responsive focused teaching.

A focus for staff investigation will be to analyse data and teaching practices to determine why reading and grammar and punctuation deviated from this pattern. Co-teaching in English will focus on refining the teaching in these areas and to be continued in 2016.

### **Pastoral Care Policy**

The School's pastoral care and student wellbeing policies and procedures are informed by the *Pastoral Care Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools*. This policy is underpinned by the guiding principles from the *National Safe Schools Framework (2011) (NSSF)* that represent fundamental beliefs about safe, supportive and respectful school communities. These guiding principles emphasise the importance of student safety and wellbeing as a pre-requisite for effective learning in all Catholic school settings. The *Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Framework for Learning for the Diocese of Broken Bay Schools System* (the 'Framework') utilises the NSSF ensuring that diocesan systemic schools meet the objectives of the NSSF at the same time as meeting the diocesan vision for pastoral care and wellbeing. The framework includes ten pathways that are intended to assist school communities to create safe schools that foster wellbeing for learning and positive, caring relationships. Further information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the CSO website or by contacting the CSO.

In 2015 an extensive reworking of the content of teaching programs was conducted. All staff were inserviced in the value and use of positive frames of mind and the use of *Bucket Fillers*. The implementation of these strategies should see a decline in the anxiety levels of the student body.

Pastoral Care is at the heart of the School. Through the ongoing renewal of Josephite spirituality, all are reminded to 'never see a need without doing something about it'. There are are many examples of this throughout the School including the ways that children and teachers interact, lunchtime clubs, the buddies program, children from different grades playing together, the teachers getting to know the students as a learner and as an individual.

A significant aspect of Pastoral Care at the School is the Pastoral Care team. This team organises practical support for families who are in need which may include: meals for families who may have recently welcomed a new baby, those experiencing difficulty due to illness or change in circumstances.

### **Behaviour Management and Student Discipline Policy**

The School's policies and procedures for the management of student behaviour are aligned to the *Behaviour Management and Student Discipline Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools*. Policies operate within a context of social justice, compassion, reconciliation and forgiveness. The dignity and responsibility of each person is promoted at all times along with positive student behaviours whilst ensuring the respect for the rights of all students and staff. Further information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the CSO website or by contacting the CSO.

The School is a Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) school. All of the behaviour expectations come under the three School rules. The behavioural expectation that is the focus

for each fortnight is taught in classrooms and awards are given each fortnight to those children who have been observed by their class teacher as making a significant effort to emulate this behaviour.

In 2015 one of our staff took on the role of PBL coach for another school which further enriched our practice in this area through the sharing of ideas and strategies. The PBL team met regularly in 2015 and the School Captains also attended these meetings, for the first time. Student input to the work of the committee was invaluable. Data is examined at the meetings.

### Anti-Bullying Policy

The School's Anti-Bullying Policy is based on and informed by the *Anti-Bullying Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools* and is aligned to the *Pastoral Care Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools* and other related wellbeing policies and guidelines. All students, their families and employees within Catholic education have a right to a learning and work environment free from intimidation, humiliation and hurt. Anti-Bullying policies support school communities to prevent, reduce and respond to bullying. Further information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the CSO website or by contacting the CSO.

### The School follows strict Anti-Bullying guidelines, as laid down by the Diocesan Catholic

Schools Office. This statement, taken directly from the School website, clearly articulates the School's position in terms of anti-bullying. In any instance where bullying behaviour occurs the 'Anti-bullying Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools' is followed as outlined in the school policy.

Through PDHPE lessons, as well as other instances that occur, teachers take the opportunity to talk to the children about what bullying is, types of bullying including cyberbullying, the role of the bystander and what to do when others are doing and saying things that they don't like or makes them feel unsafe.

### **Complaints and Grievances Policy**

The School follows the *Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures for Diocesan Systemic Schools.* A distinctive feature of this policy is to ensure that complaints are addressed in a timely and confidential manner at the lowest appropriate management level in order to prevent minor problems or concerns from escalating. The expectation is that complaints will be brought forward and resolved in a respectful manner recognising the dignity of each person concerned in the process. The policy recognises that a number of more minor or simple matters can be resolved without recourse to the formal complaint handling process but rather, quickly and simply, by discussion between the appropriate people. Further information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the CSO website or by contacting the CSO.

The School has complaints handling and grievances procedures in line with the *Complaints Handling and Grievances Policy and Procedures for Diocesan Systemic Schools*. The class teacher is usually the first person parents contact if they have a concern and this can then be discussed or referred on to the Principal or Assistant Principal. All complaints are recorded in the School Complaints Register. Our CSO School's Consultant is kept informed of any complaint or grievance and additional support is sort where necessary. Any complaints and grievances that need to be escalated beyond School level are referred directly to the CSO.

### **Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility**

Student leadership was a significant highlight of School life in 2015. The Year 6 cohort showed strong leadership, especially in their management of the Student Representative Council (SRC). Issues expressed by class groups in their class meeting are brought up for discussion at the fortnightly SRC meetings. Class representatives who attended the SRC meetings were selected for the term. Every class was skilled in conducting a class meeting by the School Captains at the beginning of the year. This gave the students a voice and the opportunity to discuss solutions to the problems that were presented, including the reworking of playground rosters for Stage groups to share the playground, specific areas for particular games as well as feedback to staff about their observations of the playground.

Each Year 6 student had a leadership role with specific responsibilities as well as opportunities to make suggestions to further enhance their role. This on-going initiative, developed over the past four years, has promoted respect and responsibility among the group.

Respect and responsibility for students as learners as well as members of the School and Parish community is encouraged. One of the ways that this is demonstrated is through the fundraising for charitable organisations that occurs within the school student body and the awareness raising that occurs through these initiatives.

### SECTION NINE: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Strategic planning ensures a common purpose and agreed values are established. In Broken Bay systemic schools, this common purpose and agreed values along with goals, targets and key improvement strategies are documented in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). This SIP is a three year planning document and is used to record the School's progress in working towards priorities for improvement in three domains: Mission, Pastoral Care, Learning and Teaching. School improvement planning is supported systemically by the *Diocesan Leading Learning* initiative. This initiative is research based and has been developed in partnership with the University of Auckland.

### **Key Improvements Achieved**

In 2015 the School:

- Liturgy team and staff immersed students in rich contemporary prayer and liturgical experiences
- developed staff skills in analysing data to better inform the differentiation of student learning plans in Mathematics
- increased the range and quality of task differentiation in Mathematics to better meet the needs of students from Kindergarten to Year 6 working in a co-teaching arrangement with CSO staff
- raised the awareness of both parents and students that the School is a PBL/KidsMatter school.

### Priority Key Improvements for Next Year

In 2016 the School improvement goals are:

- that the School Religious Education Team survey students, staff and parents to identify ongoing engagement in prayer and future directions
- to establish student goal setting in the area of Catholic Mission in Year 3 to Year 6
- to establish individual goal setting in Mathematics and then English so that students know what they can already do and what they need to work on
- to combine the PBL and the Pastoral Care Team into one highly responsive and effective body.

The opinions and ideas of parents, students and teachers are valued and sought. Their suggestions are incorporated into planning for and achieving improved outcomes for students. This year, a variety of processes have been used to gain information about the level of satisfaction with the School from parents, students and teachers.

### **Parent Satisfaction**

In conjunction with the P&F association a survey was conducted to identify concerns or needs in the School community. While the overall satisfaction expressed in responses was very high a number of issues were identified. A sub-committee has been able to work towards meeting the expressed needs and on occasions dispelling misunderstanding about school based processes. The feedback from the community has been that the survey process was well received and it will be conducted every year in future.

### **Student Satisfaction**

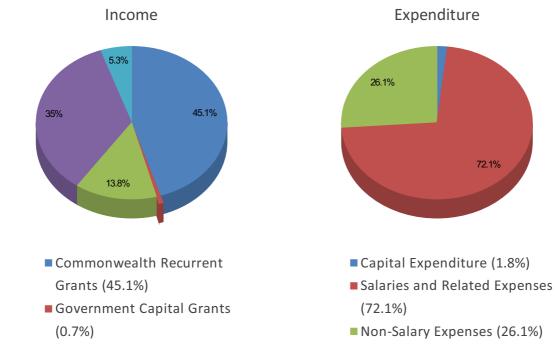
Anecdotal evidence obtained through the SRC indicates that students feel that their concerns are heard and responded to in a timely fashion. Educational and physical improvements to the School have helped the student body feel proud of being a part of the school community. Senior students expressed a greater desire to remain at the School for Years 5 and 6 as they are confident that the quality of education offered here is excellent.

### **Teacher Satisfaction**

Teacher satisfaction is surveyed annually with the degree of satisfaction around the setting and meeting of teachers' individual learning goals rated as high in 2015. Many teachers chose to challenge themselves professionally by moving a number of grades for 2016, confident that this move would be supported by the leadership team.

### SECTION ELEVEN: FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Consistent with the BOSTES requirements, financial income and expenditure for the School is shown below. More detailed financial data is available on the My School website. Diocesan system financial reporting can be found in the Broken Bay Diocese Annual Report.



- State Recurrent Grants (13.8%)
- Fees and Private Income (35%)
- Other Capital Income (5.3%)

<b>RECURRENT</b> and CAPITAL INC	COME
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants	\$1,709,527
Government Capital Grants	\$27,500
State Recurrent Grants	\$522,381
Fees and Private Income	\$1,327,782
Other Capital Income	\$202,665
Total Income	\$3,789,855

DECLIDDENIT	and	CADITAL	EXPENDITURE
RECORRENT	and	CAPITAL	EXPENDITURE

Capital Expenditure	\$59,942
Salaries and Related Expenses	\$2,438,850
Non-Salary Expenses	\$883,415
Total Expenditure	\$3,382,208