



# 2019

## ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT



### St Thomas' Catholic Primary School

2 Horsley Avenue, WILLOUGHBY 2068

Principal: Mrs Jenny McKeown

Web: [www.stwddb.catholic.edu.au](http://www.stwddb.catholic.edu.au)

---

## About this report

---

St Thomas' Catholic Primary School (the 'School') is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) 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') 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 also be obtained from the [My School website](#).

---

## Message from key groups in our community

---

### Principal's Message

2019 has been another successful year for the St Thomas Catholic Primary School community. This report provides an overview of activities and events during the 2019 school year which contributed to the achievement of our goals and the continued development of our Catholic school community.

2019 was a full and eventful year and we are proud of the broad range of our successes, including the completion of an external school review. Our successes included strong NAPLAN results, ongoing implementation of the inaugural Signature Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) units K-6, successful debating teams in the Sydney Debating Network competitions, sports representation at state level, and a highly successful Art and Craft show.

The thoughtful, ongoing implementation of technology to maximise engagement and learning has been a notable success at the School which has seen an extension of in-class coding lessons for students in Kindergarten to Year 6 after a successful trial in 2018.

Additionally, all teaching staff were trained in Project Based Learning and are creatively implementing this K-6.

### Parent Body Message

The Parents & Friends Association (P&F) has had another stellar year. Our relationships with the wider school community have continued to strengthen and grow. St Thomas Primary School has an active network of volunteers within the P&F Association, parent network and community, resulting in many successful social functions and a supportive pastoral care network for those families during times of need.

These social events have provided a warm welcome to our school community for new families, a chance for current families to enhance existing relationships, as well as deepening our faith and community within the parish during school and family masses. The annual Art and Craft Show was once again an outstanding success as a result of the exemplary hard work and effort between our school parents and families, the energetic team of teachers under the guidance of the Principal and the support and generosity of our close knit surrounding community. This event raises funds to assist in some of the financial needs of the school as well as positively promoting our school and school community.

## Student Body Message

2019 has been an exhilarating year for St Thomas'. Term 1 where do we start? For Year 6 Camp we went to Narrabeen and everyone loved it from the food to the activities they were a blast. Our Cross Country was next and everyone ran their heart out as well as cheering loudly for their colour house. Kindergarten were settling in well and forging strong bonds with their Year 6 Buddies.

During Term 2 the school Concert Band performed at the Sydney Band Festival where they won a Gold Award after performing a piece composed by one of the Year 6 students. Our Senior Choir competed in the Northern Beaches Eisteddfod. Just before the end of Term we held our athletics carnival which is always an exciting but exhausting day. Year 6 marked 100 days left of primary school with a party and reflection.

Year 6 Dancing with the staff for Wellbeing Week was a highlight. Everyone got dressed up and got their groove on - it was so much fun! Year 6 helped Kindergarten celebrate their 100 day party which is a valued St Thomas tradition. Eight senior students who excelled in creative writing had *Lunch with the Stars* where they met famous authors and illustrators.

We had STEM week which is all about creative and critical thinking throughout the school. There were some astonishing projects presented at the Term 4 Open Classrooms. Our Christmas Concert was held on the front playground and was a wonderful community event. Last of all Year 6 said goodbye to classmates and teachers with the Graduation Mass.

---

## 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 Catholic Parish of the Lower North Shore. The School is established in an attractive setting with a challenging and stimulating outdoor play environment.

The Sisters of Saint Joseph founded the School 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 curriculum offers a diverse Creative Arts program including concert and training bands and choirs, instrumental tuition, biannual whole school musical, inter-school debating and a variety of competitive and experiential sporting events. Lunch clubs include double dutch skipping, chess, library, art, jazz improvisation and sport; these activities provide additional stimulation for all grades.

A rich musical environment is provided through junior and senior choirs as well as recorder and keyboard lessons. Our training and concert bands are provided as extra-curricular enrichment. The School has undergone a major upgrade over the last few years. All classrooms have large touchscreens, ipads and laptop computers. The School has an extensive playground and sports equipment with abundant shade provided by five magnificent Moreton Bay fig trees and two large, all-weather structures. The School's media centre, based in the new School library, has every facility to assist learning.

During 2019 the School Advisory Team – Agile Learning Space has worked with Stanton Dahl Architects to redesign our learning spaces to better meet the needs of our student body and pedagogical design. In December the plans for possible modifications were presented to the Diocese of Broken Bay Building Control Group. As a result Stanton Dahl Architects have been authorised to seek costings for the project through a tender process.

---

## Student Profile

---

### Student Enrolment

Students attending the School come from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities. The following information describes the student profile for 2019. Additional information can be found on [My School website](#).

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Total Students
182	175	65	357

\* Language Background Other than English

### 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 2019 was 94.79%. 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
93.66	94.76	95.42	95.00	94.73	93.74	93.65

### 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 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 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 Procedures for the Management of Student Attendance in the Broken Bay Diocesan Schools System (password required).

---

## Staffing Profile

---

### Staffing Profile

The following information describes the staffing profile for 2019:

Total number of staff	27
Number of full time teaching staff	13
Number of part time teaching staff	10
Number of non-teaching staff	4

### Total number of teaching staff by NESA category

All teachers employed by the School are qualified to teach in NSW. Additionally, all teachers at this School who are responsible for delivering the curriculum are accredited with NESA. Effective from October 2007, the minimum qualification for a teacher in a systemic school in the Diocese of Broken Bay is a four year teaching degree.

Teachers at this School are either accredited as conditional, provisional or proficient as defined by the NSW Teacher Accreditation Act 2004. Accreditation at the levels of Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher are voluntary. The number of teachers within the Diocesan Schools System (systemic schools) at these levels is as follows:

- Proficient: 1294 teachers
- Provisional: 105 teachers
- Conditional: 1 teacher

Additionally, there are approximately 25 teachers who are currently actively engaged in the submission process at the higher levels of accreditation. Teacher status at individual schools can be sourced directly from the School.

### Professional Learning

The ongoing professional learning (PL) of each staff member is highly valued. PL can take many forms including whole school staff days, subject specific in-services, meetings and conferences and a range of programs provided by the CSO. The School takes responsibility for planning, implementing, evaluating and tracking staff PL. Individual staff members take responsibility for their ongoing PL. All teachers have been involved in PL 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.

### Summary of professional learning at this school

During 2019 the following professional learning was engaged in by all staff:

- Advanced Reasoning in Education - Think Global Project Based Learning three day Academy.

Teachers responsible for Key Learning Areas attended network meetings and feedback to staff. These networks were:

- Mathematics
- English
- Science & Technology
- Well-being
- Personal Development, Health and Physical Education.

Two staff members are completing further formal study.

---

## Catholic Identity and Mission

---

As a Catholic community, the School shares in the mission of the local Church: "The Diocese of Broken Bay exists to evangelise, to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ, gathered as friends in the Lord and sent out to be missionary disciples."

In partnership with parents as the first faith educators of their children and the local parish community, the School seeks to educate and form young people in the Catholic faith. The School provides formal Religious Education as well as retreats, spirituality days and social justice opportunities in which students are invited to serve others, especially the poor and those who are marginalised.

The School's Religious Education (RE) program is based on the [Broken Bay K-12 Religious Education Curriculum](#) and aims to provide students with meaningful, engaging and challenging learning experiences that explores the rich diversity of the Catholic faith and ways in which we live it.

Faith formation opportunities are provided for students, staff, parents and caregivers. Students regularly celebrate Mass and pray together. Students are invited to participate in age appropriate sacramental and missionary activities aimed at living out their mission as disciples of Jesus.

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 the 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 and to respond to the call for Catholic discipleship. The School Commencement Mass and grade Masses are held on Sundays, while others are held on Thursdays or Fridays (such as Grandparent's day, Mother's day, Father's day). 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 Student Representative Council (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 and strengthen their own relationships with God and others.

All staff are encouraged and supported to extend their religious and theological knowledge through further education. The School engages staff in ongoing adult faith formation through spiritual retreat days, attendance at a MacKillop Colloquium and staff meetings. The parent and Parish community are also invited to spiritual retreat days held once a year.

---

## Curriculum, Learning and Teaching

---

The School provides an educational program based on, and taught in accordance with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) 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.

A new School Advisory Team (SAT) – Agile Learning Spaces commenced work in 2019 in order to continued the work of previous SAT in order to plan for a more flexible learning environment which will better meet the needs of pedagogical delivery in curriculum areas especially Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Using the Project Based Learning model, teachers designed and implemented technology-rich, real-world, long-term problem solving opportunities across a wide range of skill areas to engage students in sophisticated, challenging learning. The School selected Project Based Learning because of its strong emphasis on developing students' capabilities in the areas of critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, curiosity, interpersonal and communication skills, self-regulation, grit, entrepreneurial skills, teamwork and craftsmanship. This has culminated in wonderful open classroom experiences for students and parents alike throughout the year.

Our New Pedagogies for Deep Learning focus has continued in 2019 with work on collaboration and communication.

Each year, the School attends a Curriculum Focus Day (CFD) along with other schools in the Diocese. These days engage teachers in discussion not only about regulatory requirements but also about the quality of teaching and learning experiences. At each of these days, the School has received favourable reports regarding its practice. One such comment is – The group commends the school on their use of student driven project-based learning which has seen student engagement and agency increase.

## Student Performance in Tests and Examinations

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 2019		% of students in the top 2 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	Australia	School	Australia
Year 3	Grammar and Punctuation	79%	59%	0%	10%
	Reading	68%	54%	0%	10%
	Writing	72%	55%	0%	5%
	Spelling	54%	52%	0%	11%
	Numeracy	54%	42%	4%	11%
NAPLAN RESULTS 2019		% of students in the top 2 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	Australia	School	Australia
Year 5	Grammar and Punctuation	62%	37%	0%	17%
	Reading	65%	38%	0%	12%
	Writing	35%	19%	0%	18%
	Spelling	54%	38%	4%	13%
	Numeracy	65%	32%	0%	14%

---

## Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing

---

### Pastoral Care Policy

The School's pastoral care and student wellbeing policies guidelines 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 (2013) (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. Further information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the CSO website or by contacting the CSO. The policy was revised in 2019 to align with the [Australian Wellbeing Framework \(2018\)](#) for implementation in 2020.

### Behaviour Management and Student Discipline Policy

The School's policies and procedures for the management of student behaviour are aligned to the [Behaviour Support Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools](#). Policies operate within a context that all members of the school community share responsibility to foster, encourage and promote positive behaviour and respectful relationships. The policy aims to promote a safe and supportive learning environment to maximise teaching and learning time for all students. It supports the development of students' pro-social behaviour based on respectful relationships and clear behavioural expectations. The dignity and responsibility of each person is promoted at all times along with positive student behaviours while 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. There were no changes made to this policy in 2019.

### Anti-Bullying Policy

The School's Anti-Bullying guidelines and procedures are 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. There were no changes made to this policy in 2019.

### Complaints Handling 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. There were no changes made to this policy in 2019.

### Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility

The continued implementation of the URSTRONG: Fiendology 101 program in 2019 coupled with the ongoing training of new staff has enabled in-class training of all students K-6 resulting in continued growth of students' resilience and agency diminishing friendship issue reports and referrals.

Student leadership continues to be a significant highlight of School life in 2019. The Year 6 cohort showed strong leadership, especially in their management of the Student Representative Council (SRC). Class representatives gave voice to any issues arising from class meetings at monthly SRC meetings.

Respect and responsibility for students as learners as well as members of the School and Parish community is encouraged by all Year 6 leadership roles in the following ways:

- fundraising for charitable organisations that occurs within the school student body and the awareness raising that occurs through these initiatives run by the Social Justice Team.
- Stewardship of creation as promoted by the Environment Team.
- School community well-being promoted by the Well-being Team.
- Stewardship of resources which is supported by the Library & Technology Team.
- Engaging the community in the practice of their faith as supported by the Liturgy Team.

---

## 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. Building on Leading Learning in the Learning and Teaching domain, the Diocesan Learning Principles guide improvement strategies toward high quality contemporary learning.

### Key Improvements Achieved

In 2019, the School achieved the following improvements:

- Most students were able to articulate how faith is linked to action in their lives aligned to the Scriptures through the work of the Social Justice Team and the St Thomas Day activities.
- Students in Early Stage 1 to Stage 3 were able to age appropriately, independently and routinely apply problem solving techniques to address real-life challenges.
- The social and emotional literacy of the community has increased and the level of self-reported or teacher and /or parent reported anxiety has significantly decreased.

### Priority Key Improvements for Next Year

In 2020, the School improvement goals are:

- To develop students' creative thinking capabilities in Religious Education.
- To develop students' outcomes in literacy and numeracy.
- To develop students' social and emotional skills to promote well-being.



---

## Community Satisfaction

---

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

Parents again participated in the 'Tell Them From Me' survey process in 2019. The results provided the school with some very clear positive feedback on existing priorities: School supports learning, School supports positive behaviour, Safety at school and Parents feel welcome which is strongly correlated with our results in 2018. The survey results for 'Parents Support Learning at Home' have increased dramatically this year.

The exception this year is St Thomas being perceived as an inclusive school where the score was lower this year. This may be due to the School not having worked with parents as effectively this year due to the introduction of more complex administrative requirements in the learning needs area which kept staff out of front line support for a significant part of the year. The leadership team will attempt to unpack this issue through Individual Education Plan meetings.

### Student satisfaction

St Thomas students in Year 4 to Year 6 participated in the student component of the 'Tell Them From Me' survey in Term 2 2019. The students indicate very high engagement in sport and extracurricular activities. Positive relationships, valuing schooling outcomes and positive home behaviours were great strengths for these senior students.

Effective learning time, relevance of instruction and the rigour required were areas perceived as strengths by students.

Interestingly the cohort with the lowest sense of belonging also reported higher levels of anxiety. Support for these students will be put in place through the school counsellor.

### Teacher satisfaction

All teachers were given the opportunity to participate in the 'Tell Them From Me' survey in 2019. Fourteen of our eighteen teachers completed the survey. Strong positive results were reported for Learning Culture, Data informing Practice, Parental Involvement and Teaching Strategies.

Despite having extensive coaching and modelling programs in 2019 teachers expressed a desire to have leadership and peers observe their teaching more extensively and provide useful feedback to them. This will continue to be a priority for 2020 in order to assist teachers to gain quality feedback from colleagues. In the area of using technology, teachers indicated that the use of technology by students to track their own progress was an area for further development.

---

## Financial Statement

---

Consistent with the NESAs requirements, financial income and expenditure for the School in 2019 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.

<b>Recurrent and Capital Income 2019</b>	
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants <sup>1</sup>	\$1,778,931
Government Capital Grants <sup>2</sup>	\$0
State Recurrent Grants <sup>3</sup>	\$504,191
Fees and Private Income <sup>4</sup>	\$1,747,780
Interest Subsidy Grants	\$0
Other Capital Income <sup>5</sup>	\$230,440
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$4,261,342</b>

<b>Recurrent and Capital Expenditure 2019</b>	
Capital Expenditure <sup>6</sup>	\$88,270
Salaries and Related Expenses <sup>7</sup>	\$2,944,321
Non-Salary Expenses <sup>8</sup>	\$1,230,115
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$4,262,706</b>

### Notes

1. Commonwealth Recurrent Grants includes recurrent per capita grants and special purpose grants.
2. Government Capital Grants includes all capital grants received from the Commonwealth and State Governments.
3. State Recurrent Grants includes recurrent grants per capita, special purpose grants and interest subsidy grants.
4. Fees and Private Income include Archdiocesan and school based fees, excursions and other private income.
5. Other Capital Income includes building levy fees and capital donations used to fund Capital Expenditure.
6. Capital Expenditure includes expenditure on School Buildings, and Furniture and Equipment.
7. Salaries and Related Expenditure includes all salaries, allowances and related expenses such as superannuation and workers compensation insurance.
8. Non-Salary Expenses include all other Non-Salary Recurrent Expenditure covering resources, administration, operational expenses, utilities, repairs and maintenance.

END OF 2019 REPORT