



# St Cecilia's Catholic Primary School Balgowlah

## 2009 Annual Report



Principal: Mrs Suellen Garey

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## **1. Message from Key Groups in Our School Community**

### **1.1 Message from the Principal**

St Cecilia's history reflects a strong commitment to ensure that the education provided is immersed in values as modelled by Jesus Christ. Our school has continued this tradition in 2009 as we have attempted to live out the values of Respect, Service, Justice, Hope and Celebration.

Among the many pastoral, academic, social and sporting achievements over the past year, the most notable event of the year would have to be completion of Stage 2 of our Building Project. As a result of funding from the Commonwealth Government's Building Education Revolution program, the renovation of the hall and four classrooms has been completed. The school playground has been rejuvenated with shade sails, gardens, play equipment and an outdoor learning area. Together with the 2008 Stage 1 Building Project, the learning community here at St Cecilia's will now benefit from an environment conducive to learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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

For a small community there was always something wonderful happening and every week there was a reason to say thank you to our parents, our friends and our community. The achievements of our P&F are worth celebrating.

Our annual Cocktail Party, although wet, was filled with warmth and welcome. We celebrated Mother's Day with a fashionable lunch shared by our wider community. Our annual fundraiser, although tempered by the prevailing challenging economic climate, was a dining and dancing hit. Keeping with the musical theme, our community was able to come together for two very special evenings. There was a faith filled, fun filled musical evening and then recently a magical musical production celebrating the Christmas spirit, performed by our talented and wonderful children.

Throughout the year our many committees continued to support our school with generosity, spirit and expertise. Our class parents provided helping hands and times to catch up with friends, our gardeners pottered, our designers designed and our event coordinators coordinated, all captured by our photographers and press and always well fed by our cooks and caterers. While our canteen and uniform ladies worked in unusual times, they are now quietly waiting for their new keys. As always, our DPC representatives and social justice team continued to strengthen our participation in a Catholic school and community of spirit.

Congratulations and thanks to our P&F Executive team who have endeavoured to support all of these people and activities whilst ensuring that the partnership between parents, school and parish is as strong and as healthy as ever.

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

Throughout the year we have had many opportunities to gather, celebrate and learn together.

As the senior year here at St Cecilia's our highlight was to have the lead roles in the school musical "The Magical Sleigh" which was performed at UTS Lindfield. Also Year 5/6 travelled to Canberra for an overnight stay and visited Parliament House, the War Memorial and Questacon.

We also enjoyed the responsibility of being a buddy to the Kindergarten children. We read with them, played with them and looked after them in the church.

We were excited to have classes in the library because our new classroom was under construction and we had the use of all the computers.

At the end of the year we raised money to give the school a thank you gift - a large outdoor clock.

The theme of our graduation liturgy was "Let your true colours shine". We loved our teachers and our time at St Cecilia's.



## 2. School Profile

### 2.1 Introduction

St Cecilia's is a K-6 co educational Catholic primary school located in the Diocese of Broken Bay near the northern beaches of Sydney. Children commute from Seaforth, Balgowlah, and Balgowlah Heights to attend St Cecilia's.

### 2.2 Student Profile

The following information describes the student profile for 2009:

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Indigenous	Total
118	40	1	1	158

\*Language background other than English

### 2.3 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.

### 2.4 Staff Profile

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

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

a	b	c	Total
12	0	0	12

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.

### 2.5 Teacher Attendance and Retention Rates

The average teacher attendance rate during 2009 was 95.3%. This figure does not include teachers on planned leave.

The teacher retention rate from 2008 to 2009 was 83.3%.



## 2.6 Teacher Satisfaction

A teacher satisfaction survey was administered in 2009. Full time and part time teachers were invited to participate and 100% responded.

Results from the teacher surveys collected indicated teacher satisfaction to be high especially in the area of leadership which they see to be professional and collaborative. Teachers were most dissatisfied with the teacher to parent reporting system.

For the past two years teachers from St Cecilia's made favourable comments in the end of year survey about the professional development opportunities that are offered. Teachers stated professional development opportunities were of a high standard, frequently offered and linked to improving student outcomes.

## 2.7 Student Attendance

YEAR	Average student attendance rate (%)
K	90
1	92
2	91
3	95
4	94
5	93
6	96

The average student attendance rate for the whole school for 2009 was 93%.

**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.

## **2.8 Student Satisfaction**

A student satisfaction survey was administered in 2009. Children from Year 2 to Year 6 participated.

The results of the student survey highlighted four areas which were very strongly supported by students as being the 'best thing' about St Cecilia's school. These areas were the interactive whiteboards, the play equipment, the teachers and sport. The school musical, friendships and library lessons were also well supported.

The students nominated areas in the survey that could be improved at St Cecilia's. The three highest ranking areas where students thought there could be improvements at St Cecilia's were excursions, special interest clubs and sporting teams.



### **3. Catholic Life and Mission**

#### **3.1 Catholic Heritage**

St Cecilia's Catholic Primary School Balgowlah was founded by the Good Samaritan sisters in 1930. The school commenced with just infants classes but now educates children from Kindergarten to Year 6. The recently renovated school hall was previously the parish church and was converted each Monday morning from church to school. Some of the first students who lived in tents on the flats at Clontarf were brought up to the school by the Good Samaritan sisters.

#### **3.2 Religious life in the School**

The school educates and forms students in Catholic Discipleship through the implementation of religious education curriculum modules developed by the Diocese of Broken Bay which reflect the liturgical seasons of the year. Students participate in liturgical celebrations such as whole school masses, liturgies, prayer assemblies and parish celebrations. Class programs support the parish sacramental programs.

Liturgies held during the year included the Ceremony of Light to welcome new students and teachers to our community, Holy Week Liturgy with a specific focus on the Stations of the Cross, Year 6 Graduation Liturgy to farewell our senior students and a Thanksgiving Liturgy to celebrate the year that had been.

As a community we celebrated the Eucharist for Ash Wednesday, St Rita of Cascia, St Peter and St Paul, St Augustine and a Mass for Social Justice.

Twenty-four Students in Year 2 received the sacrament of Confirmation. Twenty-three children in Year 3 received the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Eucharist.

Parent Prayer was a new initiative for 2009 using a Lectio Divina model of prayer. Parents and staff gather regularly to pray and reflect on the following Sunday's Gospel scriptural reading.

#### **3.3 The School in the Life of the Parish and the Diocese**

A Catholic lay evangelist visited the Catholic community of North Harbour in 2009. He used music, comedy and stories to connect with people. Each class at St Cecilia's experienced a unique opportunity to pray together, and came together with family for an evening picnic and celebration. Neighbouring school staff were invited to share in his visit and staff spent a day together sharing their faith through music and religious storytelling sessions.

The Year 6 students attended the Year 6 Peninsula Cluster Mass early in 2009 and the Diocesan Mission Mass. Students from the social justice and liturgy teams attended a Mission workshop with other primary and secondary students from the diocese. Year 6 students participated in a retreat facilitated by an Education Officer-Mission Services from the Catholic Schools Office.

The Families Come Gather Mass on Sunday morning is a well attended initiative between parish and school to encourage families with children to attend Mass at St Cecilia's.

#### **3.4 Catholic Worldview**

As a Catholic school, St Cecilia's seeks to strengthen a shared understanding of the central purpose of Catholic education-to build a community of disciples of Jesus. In 2009 scripture was chosen to support the school rules which are based on the core values of Respect, Service, Hope, Justice and Celebration.

The social justice initiatives for the year included raising money for ongoing support of children at an orphanage in Varin, Cambodia. Money raised this year was allocated towards providing a teacher for 2½ years in the school in the orphanage. To raise money, children and teachers dressed appropriately for Twins and Triplets Day. Money was also raised for the Victorian Bushfire Appeal



and we responded to a specific need in our own community with fundraising for teenagers with cancer on Bandana Day. Beanies, gloves, scarves and hampers of food were collected and donated to the St Vincent De Paul winter and Christmas appeals in our local community.

Other activities included a Mufti Day which raised money for the Three Disasters in 4 Days appeal and the Year 5 and 6 social justice students sold handicrafts to support the Mercy sisters in Peru. Participation in the Meals on Wheels community program was extended in 2009 to become a whole year initiative.

### 3.5 Professional Learning in Catholic Life and Mission

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

Teachers have been involved in professional learning regarding Catholic Worldview and Catholic Discipleship with the assistance of an Education Officer-Mission Services from the Catholic Schools Office. The model of Lectio Divina was introduced to staff as a way of praying together, alone or in the classroom with students. Staff members enrolled in Broken Bay Institute of Religious Education courses for further study.

Teachers transferred knowledge gained about the use of interactive whiteboard technology into their religious education lessons within the classroom.





## 4. Pastoral Care

### 4.1 Diocesan Policies

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

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

### 4.2 School Implementation of Diocesan Policy

Throughout 2009 St Cecilia's staff have continued to work on the development and trial of their Behaviour Management policy which is a part of the school Pastoral Care policy. Behaviour expectations were written for school rules and scripture passages were selected to illustrate the core values of Respect, Service, Justice, Hope and Celebration.

### 4.3 Pastoral Care of Families

Families were again supported through difficult times such as loss of family members, serious illness or loss of employment. The school counsellor was involved with particular cases and frequently redirected families to outside agencies for continuing support.

### 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 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 Catholic Schools Office 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

Student learning in 2009 was supported through programs such as the implementation of Primary Connections (a science and literacy program), revision of the mathematical tracking of student achievement document, deepening understanding of the Inquiry process in Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE) and the implementation of a spelling focus.

The Behaviour Management policy was reviewed and published as a draft document. School rules were rewritten to reflect the core values of respect, service, justice, hope and celebration and explicit behavioural expectations were written for each school rule.

Meetings were introduced where a team of teachers including the principal discussed student profiles in an effort to improve student outcomes. These meetings were a forum for teachers to focus not only on their students but on their own teaching. Teachers were expected to gather and analyse data, share information and ask questions. Teams discussed what they were doing and why, as well as contemporary teaching strategies.

### 5.2 Student Achievement

2009 was the second year of the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy. Several points should be noted:

- **In Year 3** students in Band 1 are working below the national minimum standard. Students in Band 2 are working at the national minimum standard. Students in Bands 3 – 6 are working above the national minimum standard.
- **In Year 5** students in Band 3 are working below the national minimum standard. Students in Band 4 are working at the national minimum standard. Students in Bands 5 – 8 are working above the national minimum standard.
- In the 2009 cohort, there were 27 students in Year 3 and 9 students in Year 5.
- Students who were exempted from any test were deemed not to have met the National Minimum Standard in that test area.

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 outlined separately for Year 3 and Year 5. In Year 3, the highest band that a student can achieve is Band 6. In Year 5, the highest band that a student can achieve is Band 8.





## Band Distributions (%) – Year 3

			Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6 (+)	% at or above national minimum
<b>Reading</b>	<b>2009</b>	School	0	0	15	12	31	42	100
		State	3	9	17	22	21	26	96
		National	4	11	18	23	20	22	94
	<b>2008</b>	School	0	0	0	18	25	57	100
		State	4	10	17	24	23	21	95
		National	6	12	18	23	22	18	93
<b>Writing</b>	<b>2009</b>	School	0	0	4	23	35	38	100
		State	2	5	13	29	32	19	97
		National	3	6	15	30	29	16	96
	<b>2008</b>	School	0	4	0	14	46	36	100
		State	2	5	13	28	31	22	98
		National	3	6	16	29	27	17	95
<b>Spelling</b>	<b>2009</b>	School	0	8	15	15	31	31	100
		State	4	7	16	24	23	25	95
		National	6	9	19	25	20	19	92
	<b>2008</b>	School	0	0	0	36	25	39	100
		State	3	7	16	26	25	22	96
		National	6	10	19	26	22	16	93
<b>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</b>	<b>2009</b>	School	0	0	12	12	46	31	100
		State	4	8	13	21	24	30	95
		National	6	9	14	21	23	26	93
	<b>2008</b>	School	0	0	7	18	18	57	100
		State	4	9	16	24	24	23	95
		National	7	11	17	23	21	19	91
<b>Numeracy</b>	<b>2009</b>	School	0	0	4	19	46	31	100
		State	3	10	20	27	22	16	96
		National	4	12	23	27	20	12	94
	<b>2008</b>	School	0	0	7	32	32	29	100
		State	2	9	20	28	23	17	97
		National	3	11	23	28	21	12	95

In both literacy and numeracy the percentage of students achieving at Band 5 and Band 6 was higher than the national and state figures. There were no students in Band 1 or Band 2 (except for Band 2 Spelling) and the percentage of students in Band 3 was lower than the state and national figures.

In 2009 the implementation of a whole school approach to spelling was initiated to improve outcomes in spelling.

NAPLAN results for year 3 indicate current teaching programs and intervention programs are working effectively. 100% of students achieved above the national benchmarks in reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy.



### Band Distributions (%) – Year 5

			Band 3 (-)	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6	Band 7	Band 8 (+)	% at or above national minimum
<b>Reading</b>	<b>2009</b>	School	0	11	0	33	11	44	100
		State	5	12	19	25	22	15	94
		National	7	13	21	25	21	13	92
	<b>2008</b>	School	0	0	38	13	25	25	100
		State	6	12	23	26	20	12	94
		National	8	14	24	26	18	9	91
<b>Writing</b>	<b>2009</b>	School	0	0	11	11	0	78	100
		State	4	10	26	33	19	8	95
		National	6	12	27	31	17	7	93
	<b>2008</b>	School	6	19	25	25	19	6	94
		State	4	10	24	31	20	9	95
		National	6	12	25	29	18	8	92
<b>Spelling</b>	<b>2009</b>	School	0	11	11	0	56	22	100
		State	4	10	22	26	21	15	95
		National	6	13	26	26	18	10	92
	<b>2008</b>	School	6	0	19	56	19	0	94
		State	5	10	22	29	22	12	95
		National	7	13	25	28	18	8	92
<b>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</b>	<b>2009</b>	School	0	11	0	33	11	44	100
		State	5	10	18	25	22	19	94
		National	6	11	20	26	21	15	92
	<b>2008</b>	School	0	6	19	31	25	19	100
		State	5	10	20	26	21	16	94
		National	7	11	21	26	20	13	91
<b>Numeracy</b>	<b>2009</b>	School	0	11	0	44	33	11	100
		State	3	11	24	28	19	14	96
		National	4	14	27	28	17	8	94
	<b>2008</b>	School	0	25	25	31	19	0	100
		State	5	15	26	26	17	10	94
		National	6	17	29	26	14	7	93

The band distributions for Year 5 2009 indicate that teaching and learning programs, early interventions and whole school priorities are having a positive effect on student outcomes.

100% of students in all domains were at or above the national minimum benchmark.

Distributions must be considered in the context of a small cohort. There was improvement in the percentage of students in the top two bands in each domain compared to results in 2008. There was significant improvement in the areas of writing, spelling and numeracy from 2008 to 2009. St Cecilia's results compared most favourably to statistically similar schools and national figures as reported on the *My School* website.

### 5.3 Extracurricular Activities

Students at St Cecilia's had the opportunity to participate in many extracurricular activities such as debating, Italian, drama and tae kwon do. The choir sang at a local nursing home and especially enjoyed singing on the Manly ferry as it sailed to and from Circular Quay as part of the Manly Arts Festival. The biannual school musical, *The Magical Sleigh*, gave the students the opportunity to showcase their drama, singing and dancing abilities. The Surf Day at Freshwater Beach fulfilled PDHPE outcomes concerning water safety and survival swimming skills. Our school band performed at lunchtime on two occasions and played at the final assembly for the year.

Students attended excursions both within and outside of the school environment. Children experienced outdoor learning at the Zoo, Parliament House in Canberra, The Rocks, Science in a Box, Questacon, Homebush Bay and Vacluse House.



Students from St Cecilia's once again participated in a two day camp at Somersby for gifted writers.

## 5.4 Professional Learning

Professional learning, especially in the area of technology, has been a focus at St Cecilia's over the past few years. Teachers attend regular interactive whiteboard sessions, provided by an external consultant, to improve the integration of this technology into their lesson plans. At the local level teachers buddy with each other to share expertise and mentor each other at Techy Brekkies on best practice.

Staff members presented at the annual Mathematics Association of NSW conference on integrating technology into the mathematics classroom.

A Staff Development Day on Science, entitled Primary Connections, was facilitated by an Education Officer from the Catholic Schools Office.

Two staff members attended the A D Clarke Lecture at Parramatta on the results of effect size research on school effectiveness.

The leadership team attended workshops and presentations by an independent facilitator on school effectiveness.

A specialist debating teacher instructed Year 5 and Year 6 on the finer points of debating in preparation for their participation in the Peninsula Catholic Community of Schools debating competition.





## 6. Strategic Initiatives

### 6.1 2009 Priorities and Achievements

The completion of Phase 2 of the school building project was a major achievement in 2009. The school has now completed its building project and all areas including classrooms, hall, canteen, uniform shop, storage rooms, staff room, library, toilet amenities, playground and administration offices are either new or have been renovated.

In the area of teaching and learning, the implementation of the Primary Science Connections program, teaching through the 5 E inquiry model, can be considered an achievement. Reports from teachers, students and parents are all very positive.

The writing of explicit behavioural expectations for school rules linked to core values and the implementation of the draft Behaviour Management policy was also an achievement in 2009.

Our strategic plan to integrate technology through the use of interactive whiteboard into all classes, including specialist classes, was completed in 2009.

### 6.2 2010 Priorities and Challenges

Priorities and challenges for 2010 form the basis of the school's Annual plan. They include:

- Formation of a School Board based on a shared wisdom model
- Implementation of the clinical interview process in Mathematics for the early intervention of children requiring remediation
- Implementation of specialised lunchtime activity groups such as chess
- Explore modification of report to better inform parents
- Engagement of parents in the school learning agenda
- Engagement of staff in the Australian curriculum learning agenda.



## 7. Parent Participation

### 7.1 Introduction

The parent body at St Cecilia's was involved in many social and fundraising activities throughout the year. The major fundraiser, Golf Day, was again a financial and social success regardless of the present difficult economic climate. Parents were involved in committees to redesign the playground equipment, the canteen, the uniform shop and the school gardens. Father's Friday, Grandparent's Day, Surf Day and the many sporting carnivals and gala days were well supported by our parent group. A Mother's Day luncheon was initiated and numbers in attendance were large.

### 7.2 Parent Satisfaction

A survey of parent satisfaction included the areas of:

- classroom teaching
- liturgy
- spiritual life
- use of technology
- leadership
- facilities
- sport
- behaviour management
- extracurricular activities

93% of parents were either satisfied or very satisfied with the above areas at St Cecilia's.

61% of parents were very satisfied and 32% were satisfied with the above areas.

7% were not satisfied with the areas listed above.

Parents were mostly satisfied with the building project, the liturgy and spiritual life of the school and the whole school musical. Parents were least satisfied with the Band program and Italian program.



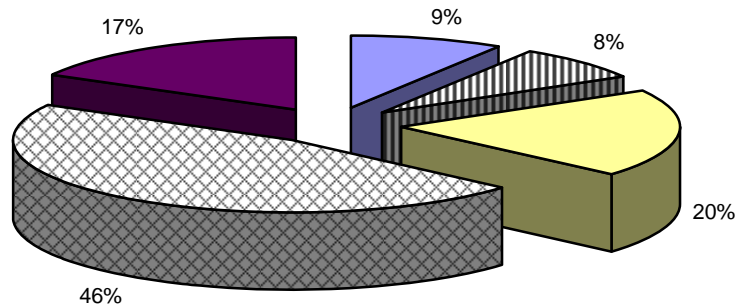
## 8. Financial Report

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

Diocesan system financial reporting is found in the Diocese of Broken Bay Catholic Schools Office Annual Report at <http://www.csodbb.catholic.edu.au/resources/annrep.html>

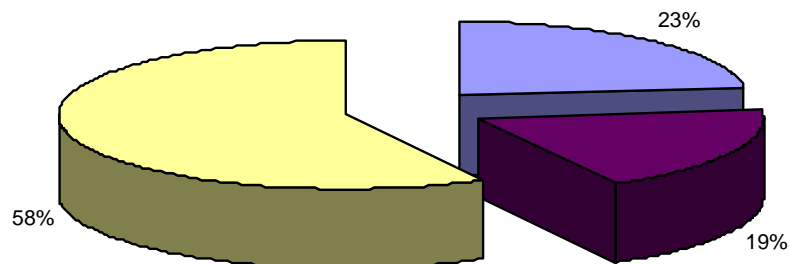
### Income

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



### Expenditure

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



The contents of this annual report have been validated by the Schools Consultant, Michelle Smith.