

# St Cecilia's Catholic School Balgowlah

## 2008 Annual Report



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

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

2008 was the year of building works. There was much excitement as the digger, fondly named "Garfield" by the children, commenced excavation for the basement of our long awaited new two storey building in January 2008. As bricks were laid and concrete poured the children kept a photo story of progress and were often seen hanging onto the temporary wire fence around the building site as trucks and cranes worked on their new school.

Teaching and learning continued uninterrupted except for the occasional noisy jackhammer. Students performed credibly in the National Schools tests, NAPLAN, and once again many distinctions and high distinctions were awarded for the UNSW competitions. Numeracy was a key curriculum focus and St Cecilia's coordinated and facilitated a program for gifted mathematicians from neighbouring Catholic schools.

In March we began preparing for World Youth Day with the arrival of a Christian inspirational singer in our parish. Our staff and senior students were reinvigorated with his music and spirituality. WYD'08 was celebrated with great community generosity as school families offered their homes to pilgrims and teachers supervised overnight at school sites for hundreds of pilgrims.

Interactive whiteboard technology was introduced into classrooms. Teachers noted improved motivation and improved student outcomes especially in areas of literacy and numeracy.

Our P&F again supported our school through providing a parental perspective to assist the leadership team in decision-making and through fundraising to provide resources and opportunities to enrich the learning environment. The Golf Day and Cocktail party are two social occasions not to be missed and provided a marvellous opportunity to reach out to build a friendly and welcoming faith filled community.

The Friendly Schools Friendly Families program which is a three year resilience building program was initiated and staff revisited the core values as stated in the school's mission statement. School rules were rewritten and specific behavioural expectations were set to be trialled.

Constantly reminding each other of a cup half full attitude, 2008 was a year when students, staff and parents came together to be flexible, adaptable, creative and positive so that the school could move forward to fulfil our building dreams!

*Principal*

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

If I were to choose only a few words which captured the spirit of 2008 for the P&F I would suggest "the building", "volunteers in abundance" and "excitement". Our community has been united in our focus on the building project. We have made financial plans to support the school's redevelopment and everyone has been pitching in whenever help has been needed. It has definitely been an exciting year as we have watched the new facility rise before our eyes.

*President of P&F*

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

Being the joint school captains for 2008 has been a fantastic and rewarding experience. We have learned a great deal about leadership and the competing responsibilities of schoolwork and leadership.

The role required great maturity particularly because we were role models to our fellow St Cecilia's students.



One of the most important skills we developed throughout the year was public speaking. It is such an advantage to be able to stand confidently and speak with a clear voice at assemblies and other special occasions.

*School Captains 2008*



## 2. School Profile

### 2.1 Introduction

St Cecilia's is a K-6 co educational catholic primary school situated on the northern peninsula of Sydney. Students attend St Cecilia's from the local area of Balgowlah and the surrounding areas of Balgowlah Heights, Balgowlah North, Seaforth and Clontarf. The school is part of the Catholic Community of North Harbour Parish and enjoys a positive, supportive relationship with the local community.

### 2.2 Student Profile

The following information describes the student profile for 2008:

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Indigenous	Total
115	49	4	1	164

\*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.cso.brokenbay.catholic.edu.au/resources/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
11	0	0	11

### 2.5 Teacher Attendance and Retention Rates

The average teacher attendance rate during 2008 was 94.4%. This figure does not include teachers on planned leave.

The teacher retention rate from 2007 to 2008 was 100.0%.



## 2.6 Teacher Satisfaction

The response from teacher surveys suggest the quality and quantity of professional development offered to teachers has resulted in a high rate of teacher satisfaction and thus a high rate of retention.

## 2.7 Student Attendance

The average student attendance rate for 2008 was 94%.

## 2.8 Student Satisfaction

The three main factors that contributed to student satisfaction at St Cecilia's during 2008 from student surveys were:

- extra opportunities offered at St Cecilia's eg: Drama, Band, Tae Kwon Do (80% of students surveyed)
- provision of specialist lessons such as PE, Italian, Music and library (78% of students surveyed)
- use of the interactive whiteboard in lessons (77% of students surveyed).





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

#### **3.1 Catholic Heritage**

The Good Samaritan sisters inaugurated St Cecilia's Catholic School in 1930 in the St Cecilia's church which had just been established in 1929. It consisted of classes for Kindergarten, Year 1 and Year 2 children in the early years but grew in numbers to become a single stream school catering for children up to year 6. In 2006 St Cecilia's Parish, Balgowlah joined with St Kieran's Parish, Manly Vale to form the parish of the Catholic Community of North Harbour under the guidance of the Augustinian priests.

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

In 2008 whole school masses were celebrated for world Youth Day 08, the Assumption and End of Year Thanksgiving Mass. School liturgies included Grandparent's Day, Feast of St Cecilia and St Monica, Anzac Day and Easter liturgies. Thirty-five children from St Cecilia's school were blessed at their First Eucharist, Confirmation and Reconciliation.

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

The "Families Come Gather Mass" on Sunday mornings was a parish initiative with which the school was heavily involved to encourage Mass attendance for families with young children. The school, due to building construction, was considered unsuitable to host pilgrims for WYD'08 however many families and teachers offered homestay, prayer, financial support, food and clothing through the parish for pilgrims.

#### **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. The gospel values of Respect, Justice, Service, Hope and Celebration are key to our mission. In 2008 initiatives were implemented by the student Social Justice committee and included "Cambodia Day", a day to teach students about life in Varin, Cambodia where a school for orphans is supported by students from St Cecilia's through fundraising and donations. Planning reflected a Catholic Worldview and lesson plans were written to teach expectations for the core value of Respect.

#### **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 from St Cecilia's school participated in staff spirituality days with parish leaders, CSO personnel, Diocesan representatives and international guest speakers.



## 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 the year the staff from St Cecilia's has revised the Behaviour Management policy and worked in consultation with parents, children and CSO staff to rewrite the school rules based on the school's core values of Respect, Service, Justice, Hope and Celebration. Each rule has explicit expectations for behaviours. School policies have been developed from diocesan policies on pastoral care and discipline.

### 4.3 Pastoral Care of Families

Support structures for families, both formal and informal, have been initiated where necessary throughout 2008. Such structures included meal rosters, prayer circles, car pools, clothing and financial assistance. Referrals were made to the school counsellor on a few occasions. In some instances families were linked to other support agencies within the local community such as counsellors, paediatricians and psychologists.

### 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.





## 5. Excellence in Teaching and Learning

### 5.1 Quality Teaching and Learning

As a result of staff meeting conversations on assessment and reporting, tracking processes in the Key Learning Area of Mathematics were refined and the Numeracy Policy was reviewed. Science and Technology processes were revisited and resources purchased, The NSW Quality Teaching Framework was used to analyse lesson plans in Creative and Practical Arts. Interactive whiteboard technology was introduced into Year 3 and Year 4 classrooms to support student learning. A Stage 1 group of children, identified with particular language needs, were targeted for a specific Literacy Project under the facilitation of a visiting educational consultant. Gifted students participated in online classes and gifted mathematicians attended extension classes with students from surrounding schools facilitated by a St Cecilia's teacher.

### 5.2 Student Achievement

2008 was the first year of the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). As a result of this new initiative, several points should be noted:

- A national minimum standard replaces the national benchmark of previous years.
- It is not possible in 2008 to provide comparisons with previous years' data.
- Students who were exempted from a test were deemed not to have met the national minimum standard.
- In the 2008 cohort, there were 28 students in Year 3 and 16 students in Year 5.

Detail on school performance is provided in the following tables where band distributions and percentages of students achieving 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.





### Year 3 band distributions and % of students at or above national minimum:

		Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6 (+)	% at or above national minimum
<b>Reading</b>	School	0	0	0	18	25	57	100
	National	6.1	12	17.7	23	21.7	17.7	92.1
<b>Writing</b>	School	0	4	0	14	46	36	100
	National	2.9	6.5	15.6	28.7	27.4	17.2	95.4
<b>Spelling</b>	School	0	0	0	36	25	39	100
	National	5.9	10	19	25.9	21.9	15.5	92.4
<b>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</b>	School	0	0	7	18	18	57	100
	National	6.6	10.7	17.3	23.3	21.3	19.1	91.7
<b>Numeracy</b>	School	0	0	7	32	32	29	100
	National	3.3	10.9	22.9	28	20.9	12.4	95.0

It was very pleasing to note that the percentage of students achieving at Band 6 and Band 5 was higher than national figures in every test area. It was also pleasing to see that there were no students in Band 1 and Band 2 (except Band 2 for writing) and that the percentage of students in Band 3 was lower than national figures.

The NAPLAN results for Year 3 indicate that current teaching programs and intervention strategies are working effectively to support student skills and knowledge across all aspects of literacy and numeracy.

Numeracy K-6 was a focus in 2008 through staff professional development, BST analysis and a review of the school tracking system. It is satisfying to note that our numeracy results in Year 3 are strong compared with national figures.

The national minimum standard data is further evidence that our literacy programs which specifically target students who are identified through the Observation Survey are working effectively and increasing the literacy levels of all students. These programs will continue in 2009. These teaching programs and analysis of learning needs will be continued and refined using further data collection in 2009.

### Year 5 band distributions and % of students at or above national minimum:

		Band 3 (-)	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6	Band 7	Band 8 (+)	% at or above national minimum
<b>Reading</b>	School	0	0	38	13	25	25	100
	National	7.5	13.6	23.9	26	18.1	9.3	90.9
<b>Writing</b>	School	6	19	25	25	19	6	94
	National	5.9	11.8	25.3	29.3	17.9	8.3	92.5
<b>Spelling</b>	School	6	0	19	56	19	0	94
	National	6.8	12.8	24.9	28.2	18.2	7.6	91.7
<b>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</b>	School	0	6	19	31	25	19	100
	National	6.6	11	21.2	26.4	19.9	13.4	91.9
<b>Numeracy</b>	School	0	25	25	31	19	0	100
	National	5.9	17.4	28.9	25.7	13.9	6.6	92.6

Band distributions at Year 5 must be considered within the context of a small cohort. As a whole, results in literacy were pleasing. The percentage of students achieving at Bands 7 and 8 was above



national figures in reading, grammar and punctuation. Although 75% of students achieved Band 6 and Band 7 in spelling, approaches to the teaching of spelling will be reviewed in 2009 and some changes in focus or technique may be deemed necessary to raise these results to a higher band.

The results in writing were less pleasing and it is expected that the newly implemented writing scope and sequence outline will allow for further development of the writing skills program K-6. This program will support a more explicit teaching approach of the necessary skills as identified by the school's NAPLAN analysis. This analysis will provide strategies to further attain the standards typically expected at the higher levels in 2009. A future focus on grammar and punctuation would be particularly effective within a wider focus on writing skills generally.

The clustering of students in the middle bands in the numeracy results is a cause for concern. The results indicate the need to further review and develop ways of teaching mathematics in the middle and upper primary in order to enable more students to achieve at the higher levels. Analysis of the areas of concern has provided strategies that are being implemented both individually and across grades in order to further develop student knowledge and skills. Strategies include explicit teaching in targeted areas.



### 5.3 Extracurricular Activities

St Cecilia's school again offered a wide variety of extracurricular activities to students. These included drama, tae kwon do, public speaking, chess, band, choir and gardening. Many different sporting activities were on offer including AFL, ARL, netball, cricket, eagle tag, soccer, swimming, athletics, skipping and aerobics.



### 5.4 Professional Learning

Professional development opportunities for staff were many and varied. Two teachers attended the annual Mathematical Association of NSW conference in Wollongong, the literacy teacher support days and numeracy leader's meetings as well as "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People" three-day course and the ACEL Conference in Parramatta on leadership. Three teachers attended the "Leading



in a Culture of Change" workshop as well as the Broken Bay Pedagogy Initiative showcase. Teachers attended ICLT facilitators meetings, liturgical workshops, Social Justice inservices and the Middle Leaders course. All teaching staff attended the Friendly Schools Friendly Families anti- bullying staff development day, the staff spirituality day and the mathematics staff development day in September.

Weekly staff meetings were professional learning meetings and general business and administration items were processed at another business meeting on Monday mornings. Laptops were purchased for all classroom teachers to use within the classroom for assessment and recording purposes.

The average expenditure on professional learning, per teacher, in 2008 was \$893.



## 6. Strategic Initiatives

### 6.1 2008 Priorities and Achievements

Achievements as specified for 2008 in the 2007 Annual School Report included the completion of phase 1 of a major building project and the implementation of the Friendly Schools Families program. Professional development was also a priority concentrating on the development of leadership within the school and the implementation of interactive technology.

Areas marked for improvement included greater parent participation on school committees and a review of the numeracy plan as well as a review of the scope and sequence for Science and Technology.

School participation in World Youth Day 08 activities was another highlight and achievement for the year. Parish World Youth Day 08 activities were well attended and impacted on the spiritual life of the school.

### 6.2 2009 Priorities and Challenges

Priorities and challenges for the coming year form the basis of the school's 2009 Annual Plan and include:

- complete Phase 2 of the building project
- implement the Primary Connections Science and Literacy program
- advance outcomes in Mathematics in stage 2 and stage 3
- attain a higher level of outcome in Spelling K-6 and Writing outcomes in stage 3 and stage 2
- extend governance through development of the parent body serving on various committees
- develop an induction program for new teachers
- deepen an understanding of the inquiry process in HSIE using the Kath Murdoch model.
- implement the Positive Behaviours for Learning program as part of the Friendly Schools and Families program.



## 7. Parent Participation

### 7.1 Introduction

Parent participation at St Cecilia's is wide-ranging but mainly coordinated through our active Parents' and Friends' Association. Parent participation on school committees and involvement in classrooms increased in 2008. Educational forums were well attended. Presenters were varied and topics included Bullying, Interactive Technology and How Children Learn to Read which was presented by the CSO Parent Factor team.

### 7.2 Parent Satisfaction

There was a strong attendance at Fathers' Friday, Grandparent's Day, Dads' breakfast and Dads' BBQ. Attendance at Sunday class masses was higher as was attendance at social events such as the Cocktail Party and Golf Day Dinner. A request for parents to assist with park play supervision enabled a roster for three terms of the year to be filled. Parents provided teachers with lunch for World Teacher's Day and attended an end of year celebration "cuppa thankyou" morning tea. Parent participation is very much appreciated at St Cecilia's.





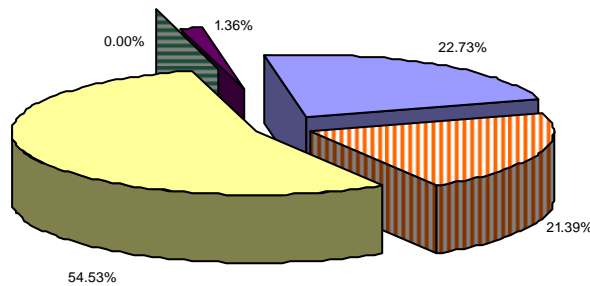
## 8. Financial Report

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.

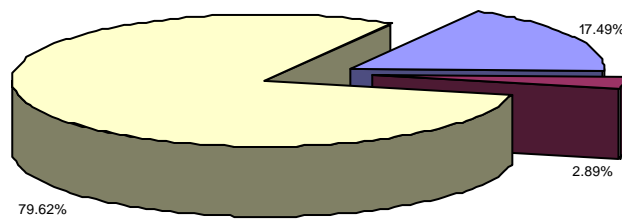
### Income

- 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 School's consultant, Michelle Smith.