

St Joseph's Primary School
Rockdale

Annual School Report to the Community

2007



ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY CONTENTS

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

St Joseph's Primary School, Rockdale is registered by the Board of Studies (NSW) and managed by the Catholic Education Office, Sydney, the 'approved authority' for the Registration System formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act 1990.

The Annual Report to the School Community for this year provides the school community with fair, reliable and objective information about school performance measures and policies, as determined by the Minister for Education.

The Report also outlines information about initiatives and developments of major interest and importance to the school community during the year, and the achievements arising from the implementation of the school's Annual Development Plan.

Accordingly, the Report demonstrates accountability to regulatory bodies, the school community and the Catholic Education Office, Sydney. This Report has been approved by the CEO, Sydney in consultation with the Regional Consultant who monitors that the school has in place appropriate processes to ensure compliance with all NSW Board of Studies requirements for Registration and Accreditation.

This Report complements and is supplementary to school newsletters, yearbooks and other regular communications. The report will be available on the school's website by 30 June 2008 following its submission to the Board of Studies.

The contents of this report will be discussed at the Parent Club Meeting and the General Information Night in February 2008.

Further information about the school or this report may be obtained by contacting the school on **9599 - 2541** or by visiting the website at www.stj.rockdale.syd.catholic.edu.au

John Barton
PRINCIPAL

December, 2007

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

2007 has been a year of great growth and initiatives for the Rockdale school community. Our results in external testing continue to show that St Joseph's strives to improve and is reaching the goals we set for ourselves. As a Catholic School we continue to promote a community that is steeped in tradition where the words of Blessed Mary Mackillop, "never see a need without doing something about it," are very much at the heart of our daily school life. This report highlights the growth of the school over the past twelve months both academically and as a community. I am pleased to present to you the following Annual Report to the Community.

PARENT REPRESENTATIVE BODY MESSAGE

The Parent Club has continued to provide support to the school this year through its fundraising activities and in its participation in the life of the school. The Parent Club co-ordinated numerous fund-raising activities and assisting in partnership in the school in many different ways. Mother's Day and Father's Day Stalls, the Easter Raffle, the chocolate drive, school disco's, ice-blocks and pizza's at lunch time, covering of books, helping in the classrooms, excursion supervision assisting at each of the sporting carnivals and participating in teacher workshops on spelling and reading were just some of the many ways the Parent Club provided support to the school. The Parent Club continues to be a vital support to the community of St Joseph's with their role crucial to the success of parental involvement in the school. The Parent Club is committed to extending this support to the school in 2008.

Sue-Ellen Mayfield

SCHOOL FEATURES

Parental Involvement in the School

The involvement of the parent community was further extended in 2007 to involve parents more closely in the education of their children. Parents were given opportunities to become involved in various key learning lessons to familiarise themselves with the curriculum so that they could more fully assist their child in their learnings. St Joseph's parent community is a hard working and dedicated asset to the school community. Their involvement and support during the course of the year has allowed the partnership between the school and home to contribute to the success of our school. Parent attendance and participation in events such as St Joseph's Feast Day, Book and Education Week activities, Father's Day Breakfast, the Lap-a-thon, classroom support, School discos, assisting in the library, fund raising events and Parent Club Meetings continued to be a focus in 2007. Parents appreciated the opportunities to attend forums in literacy and now look to extending this further in the new school year in numeracy.

Literacy Development

This year the school embarked on a different approach to literacy lessons with the use of ESL teachers, the Special Needs teacher and teacher aides working collaboratively with the classroom teacher in the literacy block time. This allowed clear differentiation in the curriculum whereby children could be extended to their full potential. Children were grouped in literacy at their level of achievement in the mainstream classroom. This allowed students to develop skills at their own pace yet challenging individuals to strive for improvement,

Gifted and Talented Students

The Gifted and Talented program this year focussed on meeting the needs of these individual students in the mainstream classroom. Teachers were inserviced on the identification of these students and their needs in terms of learning. Teachers were able to successfully integrate the key components of educating the Gifted and Talented students into their programs ensuring that these students were catered for throughout the school week as opposed to short intervals with a specialist teacher.

Technology

2007 saw the completion of the library and Technology Learning Centre. The Centre now has the capacity of 26 computers which almost allows for a 1 computer per child ratio in the Information Technology support lessons. The technology was further extended across the school with all classrooms acquiring 4 additional computers. This allowed for Information Technology skills to be applied across a number of Key Learning Areas through the use of group work in the classroom which now consists of 8 computers. All classes now have 1 laptop computer with wireless internet connection to further support learning.

Intervention Program

An intervention program was initiated in 2007 to target children in Years 3 and 5 who were preparing for the Basic Skills Testing. The program was aimed to target those students who may need assistance in specific areas of the testing or who may need support in techniques to complete the various formats of the testing. Students in Years 3 and 5 were identified through classroom assessments and received support on a weekly basis with an intervention teacher assigned solely for this role. The results of the intervention were very positive as outlined in greater detail later in this report.

CATHOLIC LIFE AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

St Joseph's Rockdale follows the Archdiocesan Religious Education Curriculum and uses the student texts, *To Know, Worship and Love*, as authorised by the Archbishop of Sydney, George Cardinal Pell.

A key component of our Strategic Plan in 2007 was to continue the implementation of the revised Religious Education Curriculum in Kindergarten to Year 2. Staff were further inserviced in the area of 'Godly Play' which utilises the use of puppets and resources to support the teaching of stories and concepts to young children.

The involvement of parents in the religious life of the school was a key part of the strategic plan. This was achieved through having parents reading with their children at liturgies, extending opportunities for fathers to be a part of our Father's Day Mass, inviting parents to lead musical groups at liturgies and inviting parents to take active roles in the Mass for the Feast Day of St Joseph, sacramental programs, leading prayer at school forums and participating in the school liturgies on the playground.

The Feast of St Joseph was again a major highlight for the school and parish community. The simple yet meaningful liturgy on the playground focussed on the life of St Joseph, the establishment of the Josephite order and the role of Blessed Mary Mackillop in the charism of the school. Sister of the St Joseph Order visited all classrooms to speak to the children about the history of the school and the charism of the Josephite Order. It is hoped to extend the involvement of the Josephite Sisters into 2008.

Students in Year 6 sat the Archdiocesan Religious Education tests. Results of this test are analysed by staff and are used to inform teaching and learning from Kindergarten to Year 6. This year saw a concerted effort to address those areas in the RE Test in Year 6 that required further development and consolidation. Teachers addressed these issues through staff meetings and refined programs to target those areas which required attention. The results in the Archdiocesan RE Test for 2006 indicated some key improvements in these areas.

The table below details our results for the 2007 test:

Religious Education Year 6	All schools	This school	Target 2008
Average score	79.5%	81.2%	80.5%

The results indicate a continuing improvement in the test results as our average score increased by 2% in 2007. This has allowed St Joseph's to remain above the Archdiocesan average which is a very pleasing achievement. Our results indicate that the children's understanding in a number of areas such liturgical year, sacraments, scripture, prayer, saints and decision making were all above the archdiocesan average, a statistic we will aim to match in 2008. Throughout the course of the year, the students awareness of social justice issues has been heightened through various fundraising activities. Caritas Australia, Catholic Missions, St Vincent de Paul, and the Charitable Works Fund have all benefited from the efforts of the St Joseph's school community. This will be further extended in 2008 to include outreach programs for all grades Kindergarten to Year 6.

SCHOOL CURRICULUM

St Joseph's Rockdale provides an educational program based on, and taught in accordance with the Board of Studies syllabuses for Primary Education. The Key Learning Areas (KLAs) are English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Human Society and its Environment, Creative Arts and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education. In addition, the school implements the curriculum requirements of the Catholic Education Office, Sydney.

The curriculum, teaching and learning are informed by the priorities, goals and indicators outlined in the *Sydney Catholic Schools, Towards 2010 Strategic Leadership and Management Plan*, in particular: *Key Area 2*, (Students and their Learning) and *Key Area 3* (Pedagogy).

Staff at our school are committed to continuous improvement of teaching and learning in all facets of the school curriculum.

2007 has seen several key areas of development and initiatives which have enhanced the learning of our students. The major focus this year has continued to be in the area of differentiating the curriculum, that is, to design teaching and learning activities to individually meet the needs of each student. An initiative was undertaken to structure the English block so the class teacher, the ESL teacher, the Special Needs teacher and the teachers aides taught as a team during this time. This proved to be very successful with students being able to be targeted individually in smaller groups at both ends of the learning spectrum. The results from our external tests results further supported this.

Science Week was expanded this year to include a wider range of entries for the Science fair. The visit from the 'Surfing Scientist' provided a great lead in to the week where children's

enthusiasm and level of knowledge improved greatly. Representatives from the Catholic Education Office and the Australian catholic University visited the school to view what had been happening in this Key Learning Area and were most impressed by the children's knowledge and interest in the area.

Religious Education in Years Kindergarten to Year 2 was further developed through the inservicing of staff in the use of puppets and resources to assist children in their knowledge of their faith. Assessments across the school were examined to ensure there was both consistency and measurable knowledge in the work of the students. The area of assessment in Religious Education will be further explored by staff in 2008.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN STATEWIDE TESTS

Students in Year 3 and Year 5 participated in the Basic Skills Test. The purpose of this test is to provide information to parents and teachers about the achievements of students in aspects of Literacy and aspects of Numeracy. The test provides a measure of the students' performance against established standards in skill bands. The results give an indication of areas of strength and areas for improvement. Each year the results are analysed by the school to inform teaching with a view to improving student performance.

The following tables report on the percentage of students in our school in the top three (3) skill bands. From 2005 the Literacy results include the Primary Writing Assessment results; this was not the case in previous years. The Basic Skills Test will be replaced by the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) from 2008.

Year 3 Basic Skills Test (% of students in skill bands)												
	Literacy						Numeracy					
	2007		2006		2005		2007		2006		2005	
	School	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	School	State
Band 5	63%	17%	38%	14%	16%	12%	50%	19%	23%	22%	48%	22%
Band 3, 4, 5	100%	77%	96%	74%	92%	74%	97%	72%	85%	72%	92%	76%

Band range: Band 5 (highest) to band 1 (lowest)

The results from this year's Basic Skills Testing indicate further improvement for St Joseph's in Year 3. Probably the most pleasing result was the fact that 100% of our students are achieving in the top three bands of literacy. Only one student in numeracy did not rank in the top three

bands. This student is part of our Special Needs Program and is presently receiving support in both literacy and numeracy. The school is significantly above the State average in literacy and numeracy which is a credit to the teachers, parents and support staff who work with the students in these key learning areas.

Year 5 Basic Skills Test (% of students in skill bands)												
Literacy							Numeracy					
2007		2006		2005		2007		2006		2005		
School	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	
Band 6	52%	23%	32%	22%	27%	19%	59%	33%	36%	30%	27%	24%
Band 4, 5, 6	96%	81%	92%	79%	93%	78%	97%	79%	96%	80%	93%	77%

Band range: Band 6 (highest) to band 1 (lowest)

Our Year Five students have achieved some very pleasing results in Basic Skills testing this year. Our aim for 2007 was to shift student numbers from the middle bands (4 & 5) into the top band which we have managed to achieve in literacy and numeracy. The school allocated funds this year to provide support to students in external testing through resources and an intervention teacher. Our results indicate that this has been most successful with the areas of number in numeracy and grammar in literacy showing significant improvements.

National Benchmarks

The national benchmarks describe agreed minimum acceptable standards for reading, writing and numeracy at particular ages. National benchmark data is gained from the Basic Skills Tests.

The percentages of our students achieving the national benchmarks as compared to previous years are reported below.

	Year 3			Year 5		
	2007	2006	2005	2007	2006	2005
Reading	100%	100%	96%	96%	92%	96%
Writing	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Numeracy	100%	96%	100%	100%	100%	100%

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND TEACHER STANDARDS

Professional learning

All teachers have been involved in professional development activities during the year. These activities are designed to develop the skills and understandings of staff to improve student outcomes. Professional development can take many forms including whole school staff days, subject specific inservices, meetings and conferences.

The school held four whole staff days in 2007. The content of these days was as follows: School directions / scope and sequence of units taught (Term1), School programming and planning (Term 2), Development of Science and Choosing texts for individual grades (Term 3) and Developing the Annual Plan and Performance Planning (Term 4). Subject meetings are regularly held at least once a fortnight each term and also incorporated into the weekly Tuesday morning meetings with staff.

In a system of schools, costs incurred for professional development activities can be expended from a variety of sources. These sources include the Federal Government and the Catholic Education Office. The school's average expenditure per teacher in 2007 on these activities was \$3,170.36. This figure has been calculated by CEO and reflects expenditure on casual release days and professional development activities in particular categories.

Teacher Standards

The following table sets out the number of teachers on this staff who fall into each of the three categories determined by the Board of Studies:

Teacher Qualifications	Number of Teachers
1. Those having formal qualifications from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	19
2. Those having graduate qualifications but not a formal teaching qualification from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	0
3. Those not having qualifications described in 1 or 2 above but having relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate relevant knowledge.	0

TEACHER ATTENDANCE AND RETENTION

The average teacher attendance rate during 2007 was 95%. This figure does not include teachers on planned leave. The teacher retention rate from 2006 to 2007 was 100%.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

The average student attendance rate during 2007 was 95%. The students of St Joseph's are keen and active participants in the life of the school which is supported by the high attendance rate. Their involvement in the key events of the school, its liturgical life and the everyday learning experiences of the classroom, is testament to satisfaction and enthusiasm of the student body.

ENROLMENT POLICY AND SCHOOL PROFILE

The school follows the Archdiocesan Enrolment Policy. The policy has been developed in the context of government and system requirements. Children from all families who are prepared to support Catholic ideals and principles may be considered eligible for enrolment. Priority for enrolment is given in a specified order as outlined in the full policy document, however special consideration may be given to individual cases. All parents are provided with an enrolment package that includes CEO and school policy statements. Enrolment fees are made up of the Archdiocesan tuition fee, the parish school levy and local fees and charges. A pastoral approach is adopted for parents experiencing genuine difficulty with the payment of fees.

St Joseph's is a single stream school catering for boys and girls from Kindergarten to Year 6. The school has a current enrolment of 212 students. St Joseph's has an ESL background of 87%, with major representations of Mediterranean, Asian and Middle Eastern ethnic groups. The majority of our parents are from a working class background, but with increasing professional or managerial occupations. Rockdale is primarily a low to middle socio-economic community.

The full text of enrolment policies may be accessed via:

- [Archdiocesan Enrolment Policy](#)
- Archdiocesan Policy on the Enrolment of Students with Special Needs
- The school web-site www.stj.rockdale.syd.catholic.edu.au
- School Administration Office

The CEO enrolment policy was revised in 2007 to accommodate legislative requirements relating to the enrolment of students with special needs.

SCHOOL POLICIES

Student Welfare Policy

At St Joseph's School , we have an active Pastoral care and Discipline Policy that is the foundation of care of students within the school. This policy was formulated in 2005 and is the core document that is used when addressing the issues of Pastoral Care and Discipline. Staff are constantly inserviced on this document to ensure there is a consistency and authenticity in the care of students across the school. The Policy itself was reviewed in 2007 where we evaluated current practices and addressed areas for improvement and/or modification. The policy will be formally ratified in

The full text of the school Student Welfare Policy may be accessed via:

- Archdiocesan Pastoral Care Policy for Catholic Schools (2003)
- School Website (www.stj.rockdale.syd.catholic.edu.au)

No changes were made to this policy during the year.

Discipline Policy

The Discipline Policy is an implicit part of the Pastoral Care Policy. Issues such as bullying and student behavioural expectations are clearly set out to both staff and students with parents notified in the school newsletter and on the school website regarding the administering of discipline within the school.

Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited in this school. The school does not sanction administration of corporal punishment by school persons and non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline in the school.

The full text of the school Student Discipline Policy may be accessed via:

- School Administration Office

There were no changes made to this policy during the year.

Complaints and Grievances Resolution Policy

The school adopts the Archdiocesan guidelines for resolving concerns and complaints from parents and care-givers. The policy is based on procedural fairness and recognises that parents and caregivers must have access to processes that allow them to resolve concerns in a supportive and conciliatory environment. The scope of the guidelines encompass children's learning, behaviour and welfare, school organisation and management, and student health and safety issues.

The full text of Complaints and Grievances Resolution Policies may be accessed via:

- CEO public website
- School website www.rockdale.syd.catholic.edu.au
- School Administration Office

SCHOOL DETERMINED IMPROVEMENT TARGETS

In addition to those achievements listed in the various sections of this report, St Joseph's has seen a wide variety of improvements and innovations throughout the course of 2007.

- The expansion of the kindergarten screening process during the enrolment process and at the conclusion of the academic year to identify the strengths and areas in need of development for individual students. This included a school based screening, the observational survey and clinical interviews with the children.
- Student performances in all external testing was analysed which resulted in a more focussed approach to intervention programs to specifically assist children with their learning needs.
- Parent inservices were conducted in the areas of literacy and numeracy to support parents in assist parents in better understanding the school curriculum and assisting their child at home.
- Core spelling lists were developed for all grades providing a consistent and sequential body of words to be learnt in each grade. This was further supported by staff inservicing to develop sound practices in how children learn to spell both formally and informally.
- Science and Technology was again promoted through the annual Science Week. Representatives from the Catholic Education Office and neighbouring schools visited St Joseph's to view the displays and the activities of the students which covered all areas of the syllabus. Science Week and the expansion of resources in the school was enhanced by a grant of some \$5,000 from the AGQTP Authority.
- Relocation of teacher resources to the classroom to ensure easier and more practical access for teachers to support learning.
- Grant from the Investing in our Schools Program for \$46,000 utilised to create a computer laboratory housing some 26 computers, a data projector and new colour printer. The grant was further supplemented by school funds to purchase additional computers for the classroom to provide 9 computers for all rooms at a cost of \$21,000.

INITIATIVES PROMOTING RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

St Joseph's have formulated and will continue to develop programs and initiatives to promote respect and responsibility within the school. Our Beliefs and School Rules are displayed in the office area and in every classroom in the school. Children are constantly reminded of these key areas of respect and responsibility which are integrated into the Religious Education lessons.

The Student Council also takes on specific tasks and roles to promote this awareness across the school. Year 6 as a whole are given opportunities to exercise this sense of responsibility through student council activities, school assemblies and liturgies. This will be further expanded in 2008.

The spirit of Blessed Mary Mackillop and the work of the sisters of St Joseph are a constant focal point for the school community. The words of Mary Mackillop, "Never see a need without doing something about it" are the foundation of promoting respect and responsibility within the school. The values of respect and responsibility were further enhanced this year with the whole school Values Forum which took place in Term 4. The student and parent community came together to highlight key shared values and identified ways to keep these values alive in our school. 2008 will see the implementation of the Restorative Justice Program which will further support the promotion of respect and responsibility throughout the school.

PARENT, TEACHER AND STUDENT SATISFACTION

St Joseph's continually strives to foster a culture of partnership between all members of the school and Parish community. The school has worked hard during the course of 2007 to improve communication between these groups by adding additional noticeboards in the playground and keeping students and parents fully informed of school initiatives. There is keen participation at school prayer gatherings and liturgies, the support of parents at sports carnivals, fundraising days and the involvement of parents in the decision making processes of the school particularly at Parent Club Meetings.

There is a regular attendance of parents at Parent Club meetings where support is sought and gained for fund raising activities. This participation has remained steady although further initiatives to increase numbers in 2008 are to be investigated by the school executive and Parent Club executives. Students themselves display an outward satisfaction with the school. Their participation in both in-school and after school activities continues to be a key indicator of student satisfaction. The student Council is interviewed at the conclusion of each school year and commonly cites the friendliness of the teachers, school excursions, the diversity of teaching and learning activities, and the size of the school as areas of key satisfaction with the school.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT (2007)

Catholic Schools are accountable for all monies received. Each year, the Sydney Catholic Education Office submits to the Australian Government a financial statement on behalf of the 147 parish primary and regional secondary schools. This statement details the income and expenditure of each school and for the Archdiocesan system of schools. In addition, the Financial Report of the Sydney Catholic Education Office is audited annually by Moore Stephens. A summary of the income and expenditure reported for 2007 is as follows:

INCOME	\$million	%	EXPENDITURE	\$million	%
Parents' Contributions 1	\$ 112.9	20.0%	Education & School Support	\$ 136.5	24.1%
Commonwealth Government 2	\$ 304.8	53.9%	Total Salary Costs	\$ 422.2	74.7%
State Government 2	\$ 115.6	20.4%	CEO Administration & Support 3	\$ 4.2	0.7%
Government Targeted Grants	\$ 20.1	3.6%	Surplus	\$ 2.7	0.5%
Interest and Other	\$ 12.2	2.1%			
Total Income	\$ 565.6		Total Expenditure	\$ 565.6	

Notes

1. Parents' Contributions include Archdiocesan tuition fees of \$52.3 million, School Charges, Building Levy & P&F contributions of \$60.6 million.
2. Income from Australian and State recurrent government grants is received by the Catholic Education Office on behalf of the schools. Staff Salaries are paid from this income.
3. CEO Administration and Support excludes salaries which are included in total salary costs.
4. The Total Building Loans and Commitments as at 31 December 2007 were \$182 million.

Parents' contributions to this school as reported in this school's Annual Financial Questionnaire for 2007 submitted to the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment & Workplace Relations were:

Archdiocesan Tuition Fees received	\$ 135,318.00
School Based Fees	\$ 93,284.00
Other Income (eg. Building Levy, Parents & Friends, Trading & Sundry)	\$ 101,733.00
	\$ 330,335.00