



2013

# Annual Report

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*St Brendan's Primary School, Ganmain*

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## The School

This report is a summary of the 2013 School year for St Brendan's Primary School.

St Brendan's Primary School is situated in the small rural township of Ganmain, approximately fifty-five kilometres northwest of Wagga Wagga in the Riverina district of Southern New South Wales. The school is part of St Brendan's Parish and the wider Ganmain community. Ganmain boasts a rich history of farming, mainly in cereal crops and sheep with the ever expanding canola now popular. Ganmain is the self-proclaimed 'sheaf hay' capital of Australia.

The Catholic community of is also rich in history. From humble beginnings in 1907 with the dedicated governance of the Presentation order of sisters through to the Dominican sisters and lay principals the school has always upheld and nurtured the rich faith traditions and practices and offers an educational setting for those families seeking a catholic education for their children. To this day, as a school community we remain dedicated to those ideals and endeavour to prepare our students to eventually take their place in society as confident, responsible, caring, global citizens who are well educated and grounded in faith, learning, care, service and stewardship for the good of all.

Our purpose is to educate and support each student in their academic, spiritual, social and physical development and engage them in quality educational activities that set them up for a positive future.

### Catholic Identity

St Brendan's Primary School is a Catholic systemic school administered and supported by the Catholic Schools Office Wagga Wagga, New South Wales. Further information can be found at: <http://web.csoww.catholic.edu.au>

We have deep links with the local community, particularly the catholic Parish of St Brendan's. Our school plays vital part in the Ganmain community providing a service to many organisations such as Senior Citizens, Red Cross, CWA and St Vincent de Paul. We are connected to nearby towns and hamlets. Our school prayer states; "We are a faith filled community, enlivened by Christ and committed to the Church". We sustain this

commitment through the work carried out in the school in the broader local setting.

We continued to work in mutual support of our parish administrator, Father Scot Armstrong. Father Scot usually visited the school each Thursday and also visits informally at other times to spend time with each class and members of staff.

We encourage students to be active members of the parish and to participate in parish masses and activities. We work closely with the parish priest in the preparation of students for the sacraments and for liturgies. Teachers regularly attend mass are involved in liturgies and support the work of the parish.

Our Vision embodies our enduring belief that "St Brendan's School is founded on the person of Jesus Christ and embraces his Gospel and Mission."

Classroom teachers use the diocesan religious education program and supplementary resources to support this work.

We have continued with the Making Jesus Real (MJR) program which has been used as a way to promote the example of Jesus and the formation of positive relationships in the school. We have also adopted programs which support emotional growth and resilience, such as You Can Do It and Restorative Practice.

Students are provided with many opportunities to practise and support leadership in the service of others. In our small community personal and family connections are usually quite strong. This encourages children to engage with and form firm friendships with a broad age-range of people.

Students are encouraged to strive for excellence in their work. The teachers are strong advocates of individualised programming tailored to suit the needs of their students and inclusion. The school has a strong anti-bullying policy and culture. The behaviour of the students is positive and peaceful. Students openly encourage each other and celebrate successes of all. Staff members, students and parents are encouraged to voice any concerns appropriately.

This year the children have once again participated in programs in preparation for the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion.

Each of these occasions was celebrated with family, friends and other parish members. We are grateful for the ongoing support of teachers, parents and Fr Scot in the formation of these young students.

Throughout the year we have also participated in many school and parish masses, usually for First Friday and special feast days, the sacrament of Reconciliation and prayer services. On most of these occasions the children participated in reading, singing, processions, preparation and serving on the altar.

As a school we celebrated liturgies for Lent and Easter, Catholic Schools Week, ANZAC Day and Advent and Christmas seasons as well as the year 6 leaders installation.

This year we held several 'mission days' to raise money for many catholic missionary projects in Australia and overseas. We are strong supporters of Children's Mission Partners and Project Compassion (Caritas). This year as a school we raised well over \$500 for these projects.

The students are encouraged to give input into the organisation and management of their fundraising activities and are also educated in the various missionary projects.

### **A Message from key School Bodies**

In 2013, the School Council and P & F provided financial assistance so that further landscaping work could be completed. This included: additional plants added at the front of the school, levelling of soil in preparation

for new lawn area around the MacKillop garden, new soft fall under the playground equipment and a sandpit.

The School Council embarked on a detailed program to address prospective OH & S issues in preparation for the school registration which was conducted in August. This included extra signage, addition of a secure gate at the front of the school, improvements to playground equipment, removal of bag hooks and the construction of new bag racks in front of the infants classroom, maintenance of the watering system and

Thank you to all the Board members and the P & F for their support, time and effort in fundraising, catering and working bees.

To the staff and Fr. Scot Armstrong for their dedication and care in all the work they do.

Guy Purcell  
President of the School Council

### **Student Outcomes in Standardised National Literacy and Numeracy Testing**

St Brendan's Primary school has participated in BST Literacy and Numeracy since 1998 and in BST Writing since 2001 (now Naplan). The school monitors the Naplan Trend Data each year and uses that information to inform its learning and teaching practices for the upcoming year.

#### Comparison to Statewide Results

In 2013 St Brendan's continued in the National Partnerships scheme and once again conducted a thorough analysis of the Naplan results for the year.

It has been noted that the students have made significant growth in the areas targeted from 2012 results and we are very pleased with the growth of students from year 3 to year 5. We are very pleased with our results in comparison to those state and diocesan wide.

After looking at the trend data and individual performance of students in years three and five, the teachers have targeted the potential growth of students as their main focus and have highlighted aspects of literacy particularly inferential reading and persuasive writing for school improvement in 2013/14.

The teachers will reflect on their item analysis of Naplan to inform their teaching focus.

A school action plan has been developed.

### Professional Learning

In 2010 St Brendan's staff was nominated as a National Partnerships School, low SES. This is a federally funded program designed to improve the education prospects of students in less advantaged areas in Australia (low SES) and is fully backed by quality research and coordinated by the CSO in Wagga Wagga.

As a small rural community at St Brendan's school we have welcomed this focus and support for our students.

Throughout 2013 the National Partnerships program has been embraced enthusiastically by the staff, and is supported by the parent body. It will run in our school for the next year.

Over the course of the year the principal, Mrs. Megan Masterson, and teaching staff Mrs. Kathy Sase, Mrs. Julie Guthrie and Mrs. Ros Guthrie have attended several professional development opportunities to assist them in developing leadership skills as teachers.

Teachers have also had significant involvement in professional development days designed to assist them in their pedagogy, at staff meetings, diocesan meetings and also with CSO support.

They have also had training in Implementing the NSW syllabus for the Australian Curriculum and have begun preparing for its introduction in 2014.

Teachers are encouraged to continue their own professional development by developing 'professional learning plans.' We have had great success from the practice of working with teachers from other schools, visiting classrooms and sharing ideas, particularly through literacy and numeracy collegial groups.

In her role as administrative assistant, Mrs. Sheena Kelly has also attended SINA and SAS administrator professional learning

opportunities in preparation for the new PHRIS system.

All staff have undertaken training in Crisis Prevention, CPR and child protection. We participated in a spirituality day in June.

### Teaching Staff

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

A) have teaching qualifications from a recognised higher education institution within Australia

B) have qualifications from a recognised higher education institution within Australia but no formal teacher education qualifications

C) have relevant successful teaching experience and appropriate knowledge but no formal teacher qualifications.

<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
4	0	0	4

### Workforce Composition

St Brendan's consists of one principal, one full time teacher and two part time teachers including a Reading Recovery teacher, one teacher assistant, one administrative assistant, a cleaner and grounds person.

### Student Attendance

*Student attendance rates for each Year level and the whole school*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Attendance %</b>
Kinder	92.76%
Year 1	94.53%
Year 2	92.53%
Year 3	93.35%
Year 4	90.02%
Year 5	95.14%
Year 6	89.84%

## Student Non-Attendance

Teachers mark the roll daily for both morning and afternoon sessions noting absences and filing notes. Student non attendances are recorded electronically on SAS weekly.

Parent/guardian notes are expected for non-attendance. A letter of request for permission for leave is required from the parent/guardian when a student is to be absent for 5 days or more.

Unexplained non attendances are followed up with phone calls and notes are sent home if there has been no reason stated after two weeks.

## Enrolment Policy

St Brendan's School is open to all students whose parents seek Catholic education for them.

It is an expectation that the parents /guardian support the school's religious, educational and community goals.

The school has endorsed and adopted the Diocesan Policy and procedures on enrolment.

The Diocese of Wagga Wagga has established a Complaints Handling Policy, Pastoral Care and Discipline Policies, Professional Requirements for Accreditation.

These policies along with many others can all be found on the Catholic Schools Office website at [www.cso.wagga.catholic.edu.au](http://www.cso.wagga.catholic.edu.au)

## Characteristics of the Student Body

<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Indig'</b>	<b>LOTE*</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
16	18	1	0	34

*\*Language background Other Than English*

## Structure of Classes

In 2012 our staffing allocation allowed us to run two class groups. The Infants class consisted of 21 students in K, 1, 2. The Primary class consisted of 13 students from years 3, 4, 5, 6.

## School Policies

## Discipline

The School Discipline Policy at St Brendan's Primary School aims to provide a safe, caring and supportive learning and teaching environment.

The policy helps students to demonstrate responsible behaviour and a sense of self worth, respect and consideration for the feelings, rights and property of others.

It also aims to maximise opportunities for learning and teaching.

Procedural fairness is used in dealing with all issues.

Students and staff have the right to expect that they will spend the school day free from the fear of bullying, harassment and intimidation.

Anti-bullying is a priority. Bullying is not acceptable in any form.

## Student Welfare

Student welfare is of paramount importance to the community of St Brendan's. Through our Pastoral Care and Behaviour Policies we aspire to effectively live out our Vision and Mission statement "to be a faith filled community enlivened by Christ and committed to the Church" and to provide a safe environment which will allow for the wholesome development of every child.

The Pastoral Care and Behaviour Policy is an expression of the aims of the school community for the development of positive and productive relationships among its members. It outlines how the school encourages a culture so that most problems are prevented and those that do occur are dealt with constructively.

The school has adopted a strong Anti-Bullying policy and supports this with positive programs to enhance social and emotional development. The Road Safety Policy also assist us to ensure the students welfare remains a priority.

## Complaints and Grievances

The school has adopted a proactive approach to resolving complaints and grievances that is based on procedural fairness.

It recognises that parents/caregivers/ and students must have access to processes that allow them to resolve concerns in a supportive and constructive manner.

Parents/students with any matter of concern are encouraged in the first instance to contact their classroom teacher. If the need then arises, contact with the Principal should be made.

The Catholic School Office is contactable if parents feel any school matter is not dealt with to the satisfaction of the parent or guardian.

### Changes to School Policies

Throughout the year the staff continued to develop and review policies according to the diocesan plan.

In August the school was involved in the registration process which involved the review of all policies and teacher programs within the school. All were found to be compliant with Board of Studies requirements.

Organisational policies are updated regularly and newly developed diocesan policies and procedures are adopted by the school when they are made available on the website.

A paper copy of the school policies are kept in the front office and parents are always welcome to view them.

### **Improvement Targets**

Target areas for 2013 are stated in the school's Annual Improvement Plan and cover the priority areas of Catholic Identity and Religious Education, Student Learning, Pedagogy, IT, Leadership, Finances and Resources.

A copy of the Annual Improvement Plan is kept on file and is available for viewing on request at the school office.

Following is an update for 2013:

Staff have had training in implementing the NSW syllabus for the Australian curriculum and have developed new Scope and Sequences as well as teaching programs in preparation for the beginning of the 2014 school year.

The staff and students were involved in the More Project which had as its focus, the improvement of attitudes toward and skills involved in reading. This included making greater use of our school library and communicating closely with parents

Several students were involved in a Language project which aimed at providing support for and improving the oral language of these students. Pre and post data indicate that this project was a great success.

Through National Partnerships initiatives the school has been able to offer Literacy support for students and additional support of targeted groups of students.

Teachers have also incorporated technology into daily lessons with use of the interactive whiteboards and the availability of 6 i-pads and 20 laptop computers for student use.

The vegetable gardens have been a resounding success in the education of our students for many reasons including education in healthy eating. Students have taken on the responsibility to care and nurture for the environment very seriously.

We have all enjoyed the spoils of their labour with abundant growth and the harvest of many vegetables, fruit and herbs. These in turn have been put into many dishes created in our kitchen area of the school by the students and under the guidance of the teachers.

This year we have continued to make improvements to the external areas of the school. The garden area has been extended to the eastern end of the property, hedging has been planted along the eastern front fence, trees planted for shade across the new sandpit which was constructed early in the year.

The watering system has been repaired and extended to meet the needs of the garden.

There is a master plan for continued improvement into 2014 which includes improvements to the garden area adjacent to the school oval.

**Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility**

Overall we are very proud of the way the students demonstrate care and respect for each other in and around the school. They generally work in a quiet and industrious manner and are easily disciplined. They are a pleasure to take on excursions and problems are usually addressed before they grow. Parental involvement is of a high level and teachers this year have actively engaged students in the development of social behaviour which promotes respect and justice and workable relationships. This is underpinned by our Christian beliefs buoyed by the school culture and modelled by the staff, parents and leaders in the school.

We have focused on anti-bullying behaviour and developing positive relationships with other students. We plan to continue this focus in 2014. Programs such as Making Jesus Real support the work we do in this area.

Our school has also been involved in wide-ranging service to the local community throughout the year. We have visited the elderly members of the Ganmain Community at the seniors' meals to perform several items for them and to spend time talking with the members. As a school, we have entertained the Senior Citizens of Ganmain and surrounding districts on Senior Citizens Day and worked with the community on such occasions as St Brendan's Deb Ball in March. Students performed items and prepared projects for the CWA Day. The school has also been involved in community programs such as Clean Up Australia Day and supported fundraising and activities for the local Ganmain Show, Coolamon Hospital, Carols in the Park and numerous other charities. The students have enjoyed these many and varied experiences and the school involvement is much appreciated by the local community.

**Community Satisfaction**

The following information has been provided to the school. It has been a valuable gauge for determining the level of satisfaction the community has with our school.

Parents

My child (son or daughter) is usually happy at St Brendan's Primary School.

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
80%	20%	%	%

Students

I am usually happy at St. Brendan's Primary School.

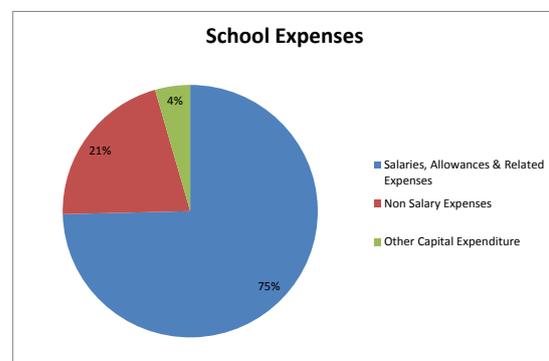
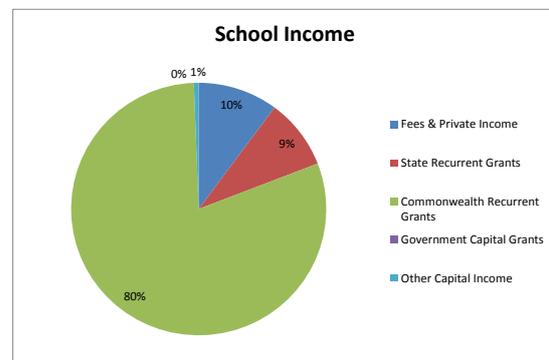
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
75%	25%	%	%

Staff

I am usually happy at St. Brendan's Primary School.

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
80%	20%	%	%

Financial Statement Summary



**About This Report**

This report has been compiled by the acting principal, Mrs. Megan Masterson, following

discussions with the staff and key organisations of St Brendan's Primary School. It is a reflection of the school year of 2013 for interested parties. It aims to highlight the achievements of the school and keep the community informed about the progress made by the school. It also identifies, wherever possible, the direction planned for the near future for St Brendan's School.