

St Philip Neri Catholic School Northbridge

2008 Annual Report



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1. Message from Key Groups in Our School Community

1.1 Message from the Principal

2008 for the St Philip Neri Catholic School Community for numerous reasons has been a memorable one. In April we farewelled our Parish Priest and welcomed our new Parish Administrator. We immersed ourselves in World Youth Day 2008 and in June hosted 150 pilgrims from Palm Island in Queensland, Deeragun in Townsville and Ontario in Canada. We also launched and commenced implementation of our new Strategic Management Plan. We have also carried on with the tradition of providing a quality teaching and learning Catholic environment that meets the needs of each child whilst working in partnership of all stakeholders in the school community. At the end of the year, we farewelled our gifted Religious Education Coordinator (REC) of twenty-three years with a meaningful liturgy. The REC's dedication and commitment has been an inspiration to many. She has worked tirelessly to raise money for charities whilst instilling in the children an awareness of their responsibility to reach out and help others in their local and wider communities. She was also an extraordinary teacher whose patience and tolerance is motivational to both children and adults alike. She promoted the Catholic Worldview throughout the school community and monitored the teaching of the Religious Education curriculum across the school. We are extremely blessed as she will continue as a support teacher in Kindergarten.

We continued working collaboratively with the parish to ensure that the foundation of our ministry is the Gospel values lived and taught by Jesus Christ. This year as a community we farewelled our Parish Priest as he headed off to Forestville parish and we welcomed our new Parish Administrator from Corpus Christi, St Ives parish. We should be very proud of our gifts of generosity and hospitality that characterised World Youth Day activities, and in particular the hosting of our pilgrims at St Philip Neri Catholic Community. It was all action stations from Monday 14th June when our first pilgrims landed and took up residency in our classrooms. We welcomed them with a warm cup of soup, a variety of pizzas and friendly smiles.

A number of families in our school community hosted pilgrims from the USA and the Netherlands. One of our pilgrim leaders from Deeragun was one of the twenty-four candidates to be confirmed by Pope Benedict XVI at the Papal Mass. This was an amazing experience. Another of our indigenous pilgrims from Palm Island played a significant role in Station IX at the unbelievable enactment of the Stations of the Cross that brought Sydney to a standstill one Friday. Our Canadian guests conducted the three day Catechesis site at St Philip Neri Church. They inspired us with their meaningful liturgies and beautiful music. In one week mass was celebrated by two bishops in St Philip Neri Catholic Church.

It was an amazing week where the St Philip Neri Catholic Community came together to demonstrate the very best expression of faith, hospitality, welcome, generosity and friendship to our pilgrims that gathered from all corners of the global community of the Church. Our pastoral response in feeding the hungry, clothing those who were cold and being good Samaritans in so many ways did not go unnoticed! All members of the St Philip Neri community assisted in so many ways: teachers who slept over to supervise pilgrims, those who distributed breakfasts and lunches, teachers/parents and students who prepared classrooms into dormitories and then reverted them again, people who offered showers, those who took clothes to the laundromat, those who organised taxis, those who brought hot cappuccinos for weary teachers, those who cooked meals, the Rotary Club for organising the BBQ, those who opened up their homes and so on. This experience made each of us proud of our contribution and appreciative of our opportunity to witness the grace of the Holy Spirit in such a memorable way.

World Youth Day was transformational for many. It provided us with a tremendous opportunity to gather with our Holy Father Pope Benedict, our spiritual leader who is filled with immense wisdom, understanding and love to be transformed into conviction and purpose. It allowed us to reflect on



how we can use our gifts and talents to help others, forgive others and to reach out in Social Justice. It also prompted us to see that life is not at random but rather a path carved out by God and that it has a purpose for us to find happiness and joy.

An important occurrence for our Catholic school community is that we have developed a strong relationship with a school on Palm Island and have decided to become sister schools where we provide outreach so as to make a difference in their world. The indigenous elders of Palm Island were very appreciative of the St Philip Neri community for initiating this project and we look towards taking this initiative further. All of the pilgrims asked me to express their gratitude for welcoming them into our beautiful community. Many of them had never left Palm Island before and had not experienced trains, buses or crowds. They said that St Philip Neri felt like their home.

As His Holiness Benedict XVI said; "Here in Australia, this great south land of the Holy Spirit, all of us have had an unforgettable experience of the Spirit's presence and power in the beauty of nature."...and his most memorable words for me were: "How are you using the gifts you have been given, the 'power' which the Holy Spirit is even now prepared to release within you?.....What difference will you make?"

It is this difference that we can make. We need to learn further how to be one and how we can continue to be witnesses to the ends of the earth. St Philip Neri School Community is committed to doing this

We were also committed to the implementation of our Strategic Management Plan whereby we:

- catered for all students learning needs by:
 - electronically tracking and analysing student assessment data to identify learning capabilities and needs of individual students
 - using the results of the tracking for programming, planning and implementing learning and assessment activities that emphasise explicitness of task, quality criteria and student direction in numeracy and science and technology.
- identified the expertise of parents within the school community and identified how their knowledge, skills and experiences can be accessed by teachers to support classroom activities
- further developed distributive leadership in the St Philip Neri Catholic School Community by:
 - increasing leadership on a distributive basis
 - operating on the Leaders Transforming Learning and Learners conceptual framework where leaders will transform learning and learners
 - continuing the Jason Science Project led by senior students
 - engaging whole staff in the development, implementation and evaluation of the Strategic Management Plan.

As a community we believe that the foundation of our ministry is the Gospel values lived and taught by Jesus Christ, which are reflected in our school motto of *Deeds not Words*. In our ministry we will continue to promote quality teaching and learning in a Catholic environment, which fosters the participation and collaboration of all members. A very valued part of this process is the working in partnership with parents in the education of their children.

This year at St Philip Neri Catholic School has been an enjoyable and rewarding year and one where the importance of community has been emphasised. I believe that as a community we will continue to move from strength to strength as we aim to provide the best possible education for all of our students in these forthcoming uncertain economic times. I anticipate the continued support of the school community as we journey together to meet future challenges and implement our Strategic



Management Plan further. Our main aim is to ensure the sustainability and ongoing development of a quality teaching and learning facility in the 21st century.

1.2 Message from the Parent Body

In the first term, we farewelled our Parish Priest and welcomed our new Parish Administrator. The Principal and her leadership team continued with their enthusiasm in providing the children with a wide range of opportunities – notably this year, Dance Fever, Tournament of the Minds and a performance of 'A Kidsummer Night's Dream'. They also calmly managed the influx of pilgrims for World Youth Day and developed a rapport with Palm Island, who will now be our sister school.

The year was again a success – both financially and socially. The annual dinner dance was themed as a masquerade party and everyone joined in the fun of the evening. The Fair and Fun run dawned with glorious sunshine and after the many runners completed the course we all enjoyed the barbeque and the music of Pell's Angels. As always the success of these events was due to the fantastic Philip Neri Community Spirit with all families contributing their time very generously. The proceeds raised from these fundraising events were again largely spent on technology for the school, with each classroom now having an interactive whiteboard.

A fundraising forum was held during the year to obtain feedback from the community as to which direction the Parents' and Friends' Association (P&F) should take for fundraising in the future. After much discussion and input from the parent body, it was decided that for 2009 we will continue with the dinner dance but try a new community event – a family movie night.

As always, activities such as Mother's Day, Father's Day, Grandparent's day, First Holy Communion, Reconciliation, Pancake Day, St Philip Neri Day and others were hosted by our enthusiastic class parents with much support from the parents. Each event was undertaken with the usual St Philip Neri hospitality and all guests left feeling what a wonderful community we have.

We are very sad to hear of the retirement of the REC at the end of this year. She has touched all of our lives during her twenty-three years at the school. Her input as Religious Education Coordinator will be missed. We are happy to hear that she will still be part of the school on a part time basis in 2009 and wish her every happiness in her new role.

The new committee for 2009 was elected at the end of the year. Some members are continuing on for another term and others are new to the committee. We wish them every success for 2009.

President

Parents' and Friends' Association

1.3 Message from the Student Body

2008, what a year! So many new activities including Dance Fever, the wonderful musical 'A Kidsummer Night's Dream' and an enrichment group for the study of Egypt which involved some Years 3 and 4 students. We also had Maths Olympiad, Japanese and Music. Another exciting activity was writing workshops as the students in this produced the first school newspaper. A group of Early Stage One and Stage One students made a diorama and researched 'Dinosaurs'.

Our school has become more 'high-tech' this year with smart boards in every room (our favourites) and we are also now globally connected with Mathletics, an online mathematics tutor where we can compete against other students around the world. Also we gained more laptops for some of our classrooms. What a bonus!

Our annual Year 5 and 6 camp was a big hit and so much fun! We went to Bathurst this year and learnt a lot about the gold rush and life on the goldfields.

This year we sadly lost our beloved parish priest to St Martin's Davidson and we gained our wonderful new priest. 2008 was a big year for the Catholic Church around the world as we



celebrated World Youth Day. Four student representatives from our school went to the World Youth Day Cross and Icon mass in Chatswood. The classrooms were transformed during the time of World Youth Day into dormitories for pilgrims from Canada, Palm Island and Deeragun.

Our sport activities throughout 2008 were a success. We had our annual swimming and running carnivals. Green team and Blue team were victorious. We also competed in the netball and basketball gala days which were extremely successful. We had gymnastics, athletics and swimming as extra sporting activities throughout the year. For one term we were visited by 'Marty Sports', specialist sports teachers who taught us about specific sports skills, games and teamwork.

Overall we had a fantastic year here at St Philip Neri and look forward to next year!



2. School Profile

2.1 Introduction

St Philip Neri Catholic School is a single stream primary school for boys and girls located in Sydney's lower North Shore in the suburb of Northbridge. It is the most southern school in the Diocese of Broken Bay. The majority of students reside within the local parishes of Northbridge and Naremburn.

In recent years enrolment growth has stabilised. There is a great demand for places in our Kindergarten to Year 4 classes. Some children leave at the end of Year 4 to attend private Catholic schools. This has been exacerbated in the last two years with increases of primary classes at these private schools.

The school has a fine reputation in the wider community. We offer students a rich, relevant and varied curriculum, a dedicated staff, a nurturing environment and an authentic Catholic community that is striving to live out its school motto: "Loving in Deeds, Not Just in Words".

We aim to provide the best education for our students via the processes of shared understanding, consistency, clarity and professional learning.

2.2 Student Profile

The following information describes the student profile for 2008:

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Indigenous	Total
103	92	5	0	195

*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:

- a) have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines
- b) 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
- c) 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
15	0	0	15

2.5 Teacher Attendance and Retention Rates

The average teacher attendance rate during 2008 was 97.6%. This figure does not include teachers on planned leave.

The teacher retention rate from 2007 to 2008 was 92.3%.

2.6 Teacher Satisfaction

In a recent survey teachers were asked to convey their satisfaction of teaching at St Philip Neri Catholic School. The findings were as follows: they valued the friendly, positive and supportive work environment; the collegial support at all levels; the resources and physical environment; the parental support; enthusiastic children and professionalism of the staff. They appreciate the involvement of the Parish in the school community, the positive and inclusive community and the support for all community members. Teachers articulated how expectations and standards are high yet inclusive of all students to achieve high standards and their full potential. They are also satisfied with structures that are in place to assist them to meet the individual needs of students. They are also enthusiastic and motivated by the professional development that is provided. Teachers are also highly satisfied and appreciative of the smooth management, open communication with the leadership team, shared decision making process, parental involvement and positive community relationships.

Ongoing issues with which teachers are satisfied in the way we work collaboratively and cooperatively as a community are: sufficient time; effectively utilising large class support staff and meeting everybody's individual needs.

In conclusion one could say there is a high level of teacher satisfaction at St Philip Neri Catholic School.

2.7 Student Attendance

The average student attendance rate for 2008 was 94%.

2.8 Student Satisfaction

In a recent survey, students Kindergarten to Year 6 identified their level of satisfaction at St Philip Neri School. They are satisfied with their involvement in the St Philip Neri Parish, they were able to articulate the positive relationships that they have with their teachers, they are extremely happy regarding the use of technology across the curriculum, they are ecstatic about the installation of Interactive Whiteboards in their classrooms, they are satisfied with the diversity in their curriculum such as the variety of sports offered; the opportunity to participate in Gala Days; the school musical; Dancefever; Tournament of the Minds; the school Talent Quest; Debating, and Chess. The students are also satisfied with the hands on learning particularly in the areas of mathematics and science. They enjoy working independently. Most of all they are satisfied with belonging to the St. Philip Neri Catholic School community.



3. Catholic Life and Mission

3.1 Catholic Heritage

St Philip Neri Catholic School was opened in 1925 by the Sisters of St Joseph and until 1983 was known as St Ciaran's. The name was then changed to St Philip Neri to be the same as the parish church.

The school and parish are named after St Philip Neri, an Italian saint, who lived from 1515-1595. He is generally remembered as a humanist who was fond of holding informal prayer meetings and instructional gatherings. St Philip Neri was the founder of the Congregation of the Oratory, a society of priests that greatly aided the reform of the Church, and still exists today. He was generally known and loved as the Apostle of Rome.

The School Mission Statement acknowledges our community as a community of disciples of Jesus, working in partnership with the parents and parish and being inspired by our School Motto. The school is committed to educating and forming children in the faith and offering them an experience of following Jesus by celebrating and living out what it means to be Catholic.

3.2 Religious Life of the School

Resources have been increased to support the modules that are being taught in each grade.

Religious Education work samples are included in student portfolios and are based on the outcomes in the modules. Children have an opportunity to attend a weekly parish mass once a term. Each class has the opportunity to prepare a focus mass once a year. This focus mass involves the school, parish and local communities. Families are also a feature in the mass as it occurs at the Sunday Liturgy.

The Parish Administrator visits classrooms and he works closely with the children when preparing their focus mass. Parents organise the children's liturgy on Sundays. Parent representatives participate on the Parish Council.

This year a group of mothers initiated a Meditation Group for mothers on Tuesday nights. They enlisted a facilitator from the Christian Meditation NSW Chapter. This was highly successful and the mothers stated that the group enabled them to get in touch with their own spirituality. The mothers found this so beneficial that they are going to continue with it in 2009.

Staff took turns organising staff prayer on a rotational basis. Staff also participated in a Staff Spirituality Day. Two teachers participated in a Diocesan Liturgical Day. The Assistant Principal attended the AP Spirituality Conference and the Principal attended various Bishop/Clergy/Principal days.

Our participation as a school community in World Youth Day 08 impacted greatly on the religious life of St Philip Neri Catholic School community. One could say that it was a transformational experience. It also provided us with an excellent opportunity for our school motto, "Deeds not Words" to permeate our school community.

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

The school works closely with the Parish Priest and the Parish Associate. There is a strong relationship between the school and all parish staff. The parish and school often share resources. The school supports the sacramental programs and is involved in the preparation of the Liturgy for each sacrament. This year thirty-one children from the school were enrolled in the Confirmation Program, thirty-three in the First Holy Communion Program and twenty-eight in the Reconciliation Program.



During the year each class was responsible for a Sunday liturgy and class teachers and parents were involved in the preparation. The Parish Priest spent time with the class prior to the mass and together they discussed the readings and prayers for the liturgy.

The school has been supportive of parish programs and has again been involved in preparing food and serving lunch at St Canice's Soup Kitchen. At Christmas the school worked with the St Vincent de Paul members to provide gifts for the Waterloo community. This year we worked closely with the parish in their World Youth Day Program.

Diocesan celebrations are attended by the school community and this year our Student Representative Council members attended the Mission Mass. All teachers attended the Annual Diocesan Schools Staff Mass. Our Year 6 students attended the Cluster Mass at the Cathedral at Our Lady of the Rosary Waitara.

3.4 Catholic Worldview

As a Catholic school we are committed to developing our children to contribute positively to the wider community. In all aspects of school life we seek to present to children the Catholic Worldview. Within the school, the local community and the wider world community, the students are made aware of the need for justice. This is an essential part of our faith development.

Through the Social Justice Program the children are given opportunities to respond to social justice issues throughout the community. In 2008 we have supported local and world communities.

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.



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

In fulfilling the school's mission to provide children with an experience of being part of a community of Catholic disciples of Jesus, the school has maintained and reviewed a number of programs within the school in 2008.

St Philip Neri School has Pastoral Care and Behaviour Management Policies that are derived from diocesan policies. The full text of these policies can be found at: www.stphilipneri.nsw.edu.au

The staff continue to follow and implement the procedures from this policy to manage behaviour in the playground and classroom.

Both policies seek to ensure that all members of our community, while at the school, experience a safe, happy, secure environment.

4.3 Pastoral Care of Families

The deeply committed and authentic relationships that underpin our community are a defining feature of St Philip Neri Catholic school. The school provides opportunities to nurture and grow relationships both formally and informally within the life of the school.

All classes have two class parents who provide a network of contact and support for all families. They also act as a point of liaison with the school in times of crisis or particular family need.

The North Shore cluster school counsellor has worked closely with a number of children and their families in strategically dealing with significant behavioural issues that have emerged.

The school counsellor has continued to be an invaluable resource person who is able to provide initial diagnosis, ongoing counselling support or referral to an appropriate agency, if necessary.

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

St Philip Neri Catholic School is committed to “providing quality education that strives to meet the needs of every child.” The curriculum is underpinned by Catholic values and the school’s Mission Statement. The school endeavours to articulate a Catholic worldview by expressing values as a Catholic perspective statement within each of our curriculum policies.

The mandatory requirements of the Diocese and the Board of Studies were adhered to.

Classroom teachers followed the Board of Studies syllabus for each of the six Key Learning Areas: English; Mathematics; Science and Technology; Human Society and its Environment (HSIE); Personal Development, Health and Physical Education, and Creative Arts. The new diocesan curriculum was followed for Religious Education.

The curriculum Kindergarten to Year 6 was well organised and timetabled efficiently to accommodate maximum learning time.

The Special Needs program, conducted by the Learning Support Teacher and Assistant, aimed to address the specific needs of students who present with learning challenges.

The school’s Beliefs About Learning statement informs school pedagogy and forms the basis of the instructional decisions made by teachers. The statement nuances and deepens shared understanding of how children learn.

The school’s assessment policy ensures that consistent, meaningful assessment structures are in place to allow each student to demonstrate his/her strengths and achievements in all areas of the school curriculum. This information on student achievement sets the direction for ongoing teaching and learning.

The reporting procedures include written reports (mid-year and end-of-year) portfolios and parent/teacher interviews.

The school community’s main priority is to ensure a quality teaching Catholic environment exists that meets the needs of each child. We also aim to provide the best education for our students via the processes of shared understanding, consistency, clarity and professional learning.

Information, communication and learning technologies (ICLT) have been an ongoing key focus for St Philip Neri Catholic School during 2008. In the school’s Strategic Plan 2008-2012, there has been a commitment to making “technology integral to teaching and learning.” The Catholic Schools Office’s new architecture initiative was actively supported with attendance at three ICLT facilitators meetings and input from the ICLT coordinator at staff meetings. We have purchased and installed interactive whiteboards in all classrooms. Teachers are continually receiving professional development on effective implementation of these whiteboards. We have purchased a further bank of twenty laptops and three PCs to establish adequate ICLT resources for all classes Kindergarten to Year 6. We are continuing with our vision of ICLT as an integral part of children’s learning.

Our ongoing implementation of the Quality Teaching Framework allowed us to address students’ specific needs by improving their learning outcomes through enhancing their intellectual quality. The teachers also worked with an educational consultant to design differentiated Kindergarten to Year 6 HSIE units implementing the William’s Cognitive Interaction Curriculum Model so as to elicit higher order thinking skills in a mixed ability classroom. There has also been an increased number of higher-order thinking skills being implemented.

Through continued implementation of the Slosson Intelligence Test and various other external assessments we have identified children’s individual talents across a variety of key learning areas including Mathematics, English, Science and HSIE and have provided special interest groups. In



addition to this we have provided various enrichment groups across the stages. Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 were involved in an enquiry study on Dinosaurs; Stage 2 were involved in an Egyptology program which involved an in-depth excursion to Macquarie University's archaeology centre which enabled the children to become experts in this field. This culminated in the children dressing up in Egyptian fashion and presenting their findings; Stage 3 was involved in the Jason Project on Monster Storms.

Two of our Year 6 students participated in the Writenow! talented writers' camp at Challenge Ranch. The goal of the project was to extend the capabilities of talented young writers and allow them to share their perspective of the world in which they live. This year our Proficient Writers' Group worked with two of our parents who are well known Sydney journalists to produce a school newspaper. Our parents taught them the processes of being reporters, editors, publishers and journalists. This was an amazing learning experience for these children.

Due to being included in the Australian School Innovation in Science, Technology and Mathematics project for 2008 we were involved in the trialling of the implementation of the Primary Connections Science Program Kindergarten to Year 6. The teachers and students became enthusiastic about science as they were involved in many hands on experiments. The teachers were also involved with professional development which focussed on an enquiry pedagogical practice. We will continue with this program next year.

We participated in the Leaders Transforming Learning and Learners Program. This is a two year program which enables us to work within a conceptual framework that brings together values, beliefs, shared leadership and authentic learning in mathematics. It has assisted us to analyse our plans and to bring action to our reflection. We have established our initiative which is embedded in our new Strategic Management Plan Strategic Goal 1B: "Transforming Leaders, Learners and Learning through emphasizing explicitness of task and quality criteria in mathematics."

So far we have conducted clinical numeracy interviews on all of our students. During this process each teacher received professional development on the theory behind the interview, how to administer the interview and then proceeded with a numeracy mentor teacher to conduct the interview. Teachers then analysed the data and identified strengths and weaknesses in their own classes and across the school. We entered the data on a tracking and monitoring spreadsheet. Teachers then compared analysis with other internal and external assessment data. Teachers went on to work in teams to plan and develop modified and differentiated programs according to identified needs in each stage. We have also monitored and tracked effectiveness of the implementation of these programs.

Staff have also worked with an external mathematics consultant on developing effective numeracy blocks and designing and implementing open-ended tasks. We have also worked collectively on designing warm-up activities.

Parents have also been involved in this process. We also surveyed the whole school community on perceptions of mathematics learning at St Philip Neri and asked for assistance in carving our future in this Key Learning Area. The survey consisted of each individual ranking mathematics among other KLAs, identifying their feelings towards mathematics, what they liked and did not like about mathematics and how we could improve mathematics learning. We triangulated the survey data and identified our strengths and weaknesses and planned a way forward so as we could transform learning in mathematics at St Philip Neri.

We have also developed our Scope and Sequence in mathematics Kindergarten to Year 6. The school community is delighted with the growth in student outcomes and transformational learning in mathematics due to the intervention of this project.

We also continued working on building leadership capacity with our senior students. Our Year 6 students hosted a People to People visit whereby they were involved in a cross-cultural exchange



activity with visiting students from the United States of America. This program was first established by President Eisenhower many years ago to foster cultural understanding, harmony and peace through the youth of our world.

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. All students in Years 3 and 5 at St. Philip Neri sat the test in its entirety.
- In the 2008 cohort, there were 32 students in Year 3 and 20 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
Reading	School	0	3	3	0	28	66	100
	National	6.1	12	17.7	23	21.7	17.7	92.1
Writing	School	0	0	6	6	34	53	100
	National	2.9	6.5	15.6	28.7	27.4	17.2	95.4
Spelling	School	0	3	0	9	47	41	100
	National	5.9	10	19	25.9	21.9	15.5	92.4
Grammar & Punctuation	School	0	3	3	6	22	66	100
	National	6.6	10.7	17.3	23.3	21.3	19.1	91.7
Numeracy	School	0	3	3	9	31	53	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 at Bands 5 and 6 combined) was higher than national figures in every test area. It was also pleasing to see that the percentage of students in the lower bands was much lower than national figures, and that in all test areas all students achieved at or above the national minimum. The NAPLAN results at Year 3 indicate that current teaching programs and intervention strategies are working effectively to support student skills and knowledge across all facets of literacy and numeracy. These approaches will be continued in 2009 with the expectation that students will continue to extend and develop their skills in these critical areas.



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
Reading	School	0	0	10	20	30	40	100
	National	7.5	13.6	23.9	26	18.1	9.3	90.9
Writing	School	0	5	0	30	25	40	100
	National	5.9	11.8	25.3	29.3	17.9	8.3	92.5
Spelling	School	0	5	10	10	60	15	100
	National	6.8	12.8	24.9	28.2	18.2	7.6	91.7
Grammar & Punctuation	School	0	0	5	30	25	40	100
	National	6.6	11	21.2	26.4	19.9	13.4	91.9
Numeracy	School	0	5	10	20	50	15	100
	National	5.9	17.4	28.9	25.7	13.9	6.6	92.6

It was pleasing that in all areas of testing, all students achieved at or above the national minimum, indicating again that intervention and within-class support for students at risk is effective. Band distributions in reading continue to reflect relative strengths in this area, and provide support for continuing the current teaching programs. It is recognised that specific skills development has contributed to extending students in the higher bands and this needs to continue. Spelling is an area identified for intervention. Close attention to the standards typically expected at the higher levels will be a priority in 2009, and explicit teaching of the necessary skills will be an emphasis. The numeracy results were particularly pleasing considering the explicit teaching and intervention that has taken place. This needs to continue to ensure further growth and development. We also need to review and refine expected standards and ways of teaching mathematics in the upper primary in order to enable more students to achieve at the higher levels and carry on the growth in the transition to Stage 4. This review will take place in 2009.

External Competitions

Fifty primary students elected to participate in the Australasian Schools English Competition. They received three High Distinctions, thirteen Distinctions and twenty-two Credits.

Forty students from Years 3 to 6 participated in the Australasian Schools Writing Competition. The children demonstrated a high level of writing skills. We received four High Distinctions, ten Distinctions and thirteen Credits.

Forty-seven children participated in the Australasian Schools Spelling Assessment. We received two High Distinctions, nine Distinctions and nineteen Credits.

Fifty primary students elected to participate in the Australasian Schools Mathematics Competition. They received ten Distinctions and twenty-four Credits.

Thirty-three primary students elected to participate in the Australasian Schools Computer Competition. They received one High Distinctions, seven Distinctions and twelve Credits.

Fifty primary students elected to participate in the Australasian Schools Science Competition. They received seven Distinctions and eight Credits.

The results of the National Assessment Program - Literacy and school-based assessments across all classes in the school indicate that the literacy program is highly effective in meeting each student's individual needs and encouraging them to reach their full potential.

The teachers and the Learning Support team continue to monitor the progress of individual students and respond appropriately by offering support and providing a wide range of appropriate resources and programs.



The excellent results reflect the outstanding teaching that the children receive, not only in the years they sit for the NAPLAN tests but throughout all the years of schooling at St Philip Neri Catholic School.

Maths Olympiad

Talented mathematicians in the primary classes are offered the opportunity to participate in extension activities with an emphasis on problem solving. Each year a team of upper primary students enter the Australian Primary Schools Mathematical Olympiads. This year we entered a team of thirty students from Years 4-6 in the Australasian Problem Solving Mathematical Olympiad Competition. Some students from St Thomas' Catholic School, Willoughby also participated in our team. The children are to be congratulated on their excellent problem solving skills. Five students achieved in the top 10% and twelve students achieved in the top 25% in the entire competition throughout Australia and South-East Asia. Two Year 6 students equally achieved the highest individual score for our team.

5.3 Extracurricular Activities

Music

A specialist music teacher is employed two days a week. All classes have one lesson per week. In addition there were opportunities for children to participate in a junior and senior choir, a recorder ensemble and the school orchestra. In these groups children enthusiastically demonstrated their talent at concerts for the rest of the school and for their families. This year the students in Years 4 to 6 entered the Warringah Eisteddfod in the choral section and we won first prize. We were delighted!

In Term 4 all students were involved in two performances of Shakespeare's, "Kidsummer Night's Dream", produced by our music teacher. The musical was a great success and demonstrated our students' musical and dancing skills.

Musica Viva and The Australian Opera performed for the children during the year.

This year we have continued with BayMusic and it has continued to work extremely well. The children are developing their level of competency in various musical instruments such as the piano, drums, saxophone, clarinet, violin and flute. The children's confidence and competence has developed so much that they are sitting exams and performing in public.

Sport

The school's Physical Education program catered for a diverse range of interests and abilities. It provided opportunities for skill development and exposure to a variety of sports and competitions.

The emphasis in class lessons has been on the development of fundamental motor and gross motor skills, gymnastics, dance and swimming.

In addition, the students attended clinics for soccer, rugby, cricket and Aussie rules.

The school held successful athletics and swimming carnivals. Children from Year 2 onward were able to participate in diocesan gala days for netball, soccer, basketball, cross country, athletics and swimming. Several elite athletes were chosen to represent Polding at the state level.

For our dance component this year the children participated in the Dancefever Program. This culminated in an Inter-School Dance Challenge at Sydney Olympic Park's Sports Centre. The children are to be commended for their excellent results.

Years 5 and 6 students participated in a Surf Awareness program.



Public Speaking

In 2008 the whole school public speaking program was continued. Children from each class prepared and presented a speech to an audience of parents and children.

The school participated in the final for the Lower North Shore Cluster Public Speaking Competition. Two students were selected to participate in this event and both students came first and second and progressed to the Diocesan final.

Chess

In 2008 four teams participated in the Junior League Chess Competition. The children thoroughly enjoyed it. The children's skills, proficiency and understanding in the mastery of the game have developed.

Debating

In 2008 our Stage Three students were involved in a Debating Circle with neighbouring schools in the North Shore Cluster. The students had the opportunity to develop their skills in articulating their point of view and rebutting their case.

5.4 Professional Learning

The average expenditure on professional learning, per teacher, in 2008 was \$1,269.

The teachers and support staff are committed to personal and professional development. Most of this occurs out of school hours during staff meetings, inservice courses, university courses and professional conferences.

At a Diocesan level staff attended a variety of courses in 2008 including: Broken Bay Pedagogy Initiative; CPR course; specific Occupational Health and Safety training; and various technology-related professional learning opportunities. School-based professional learning utilised outside expertise, including literacy, numeracy and differentiated education consultants and personnel from the Catholic Schools Office.

Other courses attended by staff included: First Aid, Anaphylaxis, Assessing Mathematics; Certificate in Primary Mathematics, Gifted Education, Boys' Education, Personal Development, and Health and Physical Education.

Workshops conducted by external education consultants focused on contemporary educational pedagogy.

Staff development days focused on mathematics, science and technology and the differentiated curriculum.

Teachers were also involved in the Leaders Transforming Learners and Learning Project.

During 2008 the school's Learning Support Teacher attended specific courses related to children with learning difficulties including catering for the child with autism.



6. Strategic Initiatives

6.1 2008 Priorities and Achievements

The Annual Plan for 2008 was developed out of the School Strategic Plan 2008- 2012. The Annual Plan was presented to the school community at a P&F meeting. Key school initiatives for 2008 are outlined in four strategic areas in the Annual Plan. This year was instrumental in launching this new Strategic Plan and taking it forward. Detailed below are the achievements so far. Whilst evaluating our Annual Plan as a school community we realised that we were somewhat ambitious.

- Analysed BST and NAPLAN results and designed strategies and implemented them in order to increase student outcomes.
- Measured value added education and organised programs to assist children whose growth is not marked.
- Implemented clinical interviews in mathematics for all children Kindergarten to Year 6 and designed a tracking device to monitor and track their progress.
- Implemented a whole school tracking device currently as a work in progress.
- Designed an effective model for our Large Class Support Teachers.
- Trialled cross-stage tutoring groups in the areas of literacy and numeracy in Early Stage 1 and Stage 1.
- Implemented effective numeracy blocks.
- Introduced Mathletics computer program Kindergarten to Year 6 to supplement children's learning.
- Commenced problem solving groups in Stage 2 and Maths Olympiad for Stage 3.
- Implemented Jason Science Project in Stage 3.
- Implemented Primary Connections Science Project Kindergarten to Year 6.
- Installed interactive whiteboards throughout the school.
- Continually improved practices to ensure St Philip Neri is a more effective and quality teaching and learning facility.

6.2 2009 Priorities and Challenges

During the 2009 school year, ICLT will continue to be a priority area. The school will continue to upgrade and expand hardware and infrastructure. The continued support of the P&F in fundraising will facilitate this upgrade.

The ongoing deployment of new technology challenges educators to examine pedagogy and beliefs about learning. In 2009, teachers will undertake professional development in the integration of higher order thinking skills into teaching and learning strategies across all Key Learning Areas. This professional development will give particular emphasis to quality teaching and learning pedagogical practices.

They will be supported with the effective use of ICLT in their teaching and learning and with their effective use of interactive whiteboards.

The school will continue to develop its Gifted Policy. This is in response to an identified need to document and ensure consistency of approach and intent in addressing the needs of the gifted. This development will be linked to the integration of higher order thinking skills and the broader use of *myclasses* properties.



In line with the introduction of a mandated Diocesan reporting format, all teachers will be supported through professional development in understanding and implementing this format. The school's assessment and reporting policy will be reviewed in line with the changes.

We will continue to implement our new Strategic Plan and take it forward. We will also continue with both the LTLL and the ASISTM Science Projects.

In 2009 we will also have to confront a gender issue whereby we will have 26 boys in Year 3 and an all female Year 5 class.

2009 will also bring the restructuring of the St Philip Neri Parish when we become one of three parishes as we join St Thomas' Willoughby and St Leonard's Naremburn.



7. Parent Participation

7.1 Introduction

There is a strong sense of community at St Philip Neri and parents are actively involved in all aspects of school life. Parents value education and are interested in all that pertains to their child's learning.

The P&F represents all families and friends of the children at the school. The P&F is very active and involved in raising funds for the benefit of the children, enhancing the profile of the school and strengthening ties within the school community. It is a very strong and active organisation and is an integral part of this school.

The P&F meets once each term with the Executive meeting an additional four times. There is an annual election of office bearers to the Executive Committee. Their role is to facilitate, coordinate and organise activities within the Association.

In 2008 there were two major fundraisers: a Dinner Dance (in May) co-ordinated by Year 2 parents and a Fair and Fun Run (in August). The Fair was co-ordinated by the P&F Executive and the Fun Run organised by Year 4 parents. Each class had specific roles and responsibilities at the Fair.

The P&F Executive Committee also organised and catered for the "Tears and Tissues" for Kindergarten parents on the first day of school, the morning tea for Grandparent's Day and the farewell for Year 6 children, parents and friends.

Every class has a group of parents who take on the role of class parents. In 2008 their responsibilities included: co-ordinating informal get-togethers for parents and children; welcoming new families; helping mothers with new babies or illness in the family; assisting class teachers in a variety of roles, and assisting the P&F with fundraising efforts and social events.

Specific functions included organising: Mother's Day Afternoon Tea; Welcome Morning Tea for Kindergarten parents; End of Year Party; Welcome Drinks Evening; Father's Day Breakfast; Afternoon Tea after Confirmation and Morning Tea after First Communion. These activities enhanced the spirit of the community and helped to make everyone feel very welcome and involved at the school.

The school promotes and encourages the concept of parents supporting the class teacher in optimising the learning opportunities for the children. Teachers value and appreciate the extra support provided by parents.

Parents have assisted in many curriculum areas: literacy, numeracy, dance, sport, technology, art and science.

In addition they have accompanied classes on excursions and assisted in the library.

A parent organised the Scholastic Book Club.

During the year several parents worked closely with the teacher-librarian shelving and covering library books and take-home reading books.

The Uniform Shop is run by parent volunteers. They manage the shop and organise the ordering, purchasing and stocking of summer, winter, and sports uniforms. Profits from the Uniform Shop are presented to the P&F.

Each class had a Focus Mass during the year at the regular 9am Sunday Mass. Class parents worked with the Religious Education Coordinator and class teacher to co-ordinate the Mass and organise the morning tea that followed.

Parents are always supportive of our sporting events. Many parents assisted at our whole school swimming and athletics carnivals. Parents also helped with the coaching and training of our athletes.



for gala days and cluster carnivals and were often called upon to take on significant roles at these events.

Parents also assisted us with World Youth Day by transforming classrooms into dormitories and back again, organising and serving meals, supporting teachers, and opening their home for home stay opportunities. 2008 was another year that we greatly valued our amazing parents and their participation at St Philip Neri!

7.2 Parent Satisfaction

At the end of 2008, the parents of St Philip Neri were invited to complete a survey about the school. About 30% of the parent population returned the survey with almost 90% commenting about their satisfaction with the inclusiveness, the small community atmosphere, the learning environment, the open and transparent communication, the staff and the leadership team at St Philip Neri.

More than 90% of the parent population believe that St Philip Neri:

- encourages a sense of pride in achievement and a sense of self worth
- has clear goals and a positive school identity
- has high standards of student behaviour.

The parent community commented on the area of curriculum with almost 85% of parents happy that at St Philip Neri, their child's interests and talents are being developed and encouraged. Almost 95% of parents were pleased that St Philip Neri assists to develop understandings and skills needed beyond school. High expectations were commented on with 98% of parents aware that St Philip Neri encourages achievement across a broad range of areas.

Parents who responded to the surveys were very supportive of the religious and pastoral needs of students being met at St Philip Neri. Parents were also supportive of the professional, committed and professional staff that encourage the children to achieve to their best ability.

In the area of open comments in the surveys, parents were very positive with their feedback about the introduction of enrichment and support groups. They identified that their children were supported or extended with their learning in an encouraging environment. The approachable, enthusiastic leadership team and teachers were named as contributing to the warm and friendly atmosphere of St Philip Neri and hence a student body that is motivated and inspired to learn.

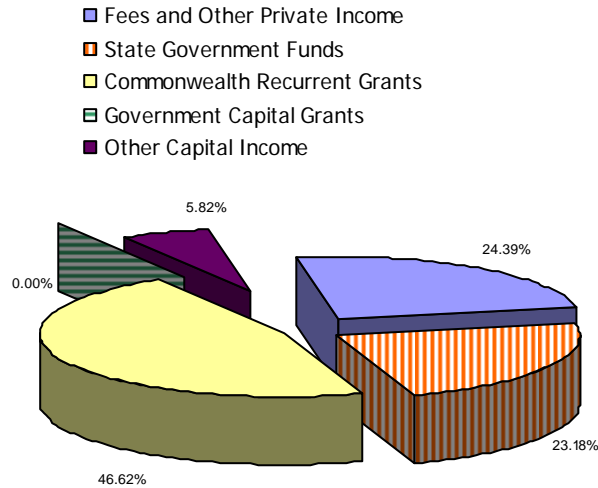


8. Financial Report

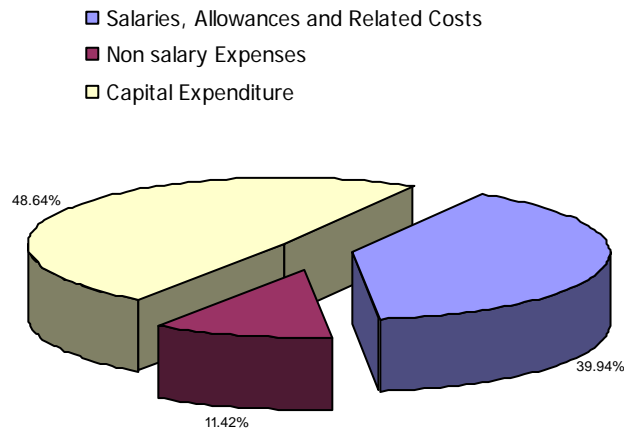
Consistent with Board of Studies requirements, financial income and expenditure for this school is shown in the graphs below.

Diocesan system financial reporting is found in the Diocese of Broken Bay Catholic Schools Office Annual Report.

Income



Expenditure



The contents of this annual report have been validated by the School's consultant, Diann Hynes.