

Maria Regina Catholic School Avalon

2008 Annual Report



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1. Message from Key Groups in Our School Community

1.1 Message from the Principal

Our annual school report provides information to the community about the progress of our school during 2008. Maria Regina is a welcoming, inclusive school where staff, parents and parish work towards providing our children with a happy, challenging environment. Maria Regina's Vision challenges us to be "Inspired by the call to discipleship in Christ and committed to excellence in Teaching and Learning. We strive to make a difference as a community by embracing and celebrating the uniqueness, creativity and achievements of each individual".

Maria Regina was successful in gaining a community water grant at the beginning of 2008. Four new water tanks were installed along with new cisterns with water saving flush and water saving taps. The tank water is used for the toilets and irrigation.

We were also successful in gaining grants for two whole school projects. Firstly, the Friendly School Friendly Families, a Catholic Schools Office funded project which challenges and encourages schools to examine how their organisation, ethos, learning environments and responses to bullying inhibit behaviour and enhance social skills. The other project was Science in Primary Schools (SiPS), which links Science and Literacy and was funded by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training.

1.2 Message from the Parent Body

Maria Regina's Parents' and Friends' (P & F) have a very close working relationship with the school's Principal, Assistant Principal and staff members. It works with the school to achieve goals set out in the strategic plan.

The Executive Committee meets at least once a term with the Principal to discuss the P & F commitment to helping the school with the strategic plan and with any decision-making policies where the Principal requires input from the parents. The Executive Committee will raise any issues or concerns which have been brought to them from the school community and will discuss any ideas that have been brought to them from the school community which may be of a benefit in successfully achieving the goals set out for the year. An agenda is then developed for the next P & F General Meeting.

P & F and nominated Class Parents worked together to organise fund-raising and social events such as Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day Breakfasts, Trivia nights and Open Air Cinemas.

1.3 Message from the Student Body

The Student Representative Council reported that a highlight was the school musical, "It's About Time!" The students really worked hard and enjoyed the singing and dancing. They had a lot of fun preparing the scenes and wearing the costumes made by the parents. They liked the variety of dances and all agreed it was a wonderful experience.





2. School Profile

2.1 Introduction

Maria Regina Catholic School is a single stream K to 6 co-educational school, located in the Broken Bay Diocese on Sydney's northern peninsula at Avalon Beach. Students are primarily drawn from the surrounding areas of Avalon, Bilgola, Whale Beach, Palm Beach, Clareville and Newport.

The school enjoys a positive reputation for academic standards, a nurturing, pastoral environment and the engagement of students in a range of key learning opportunities.

The school Vision and Mission statement is reflected in all aspects of school life.

2.2 Student Profile

The following information describes the student profile for 2008:

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Indigenous	Total
95	67	8	0	162

*Language background other than English

2.3 Enrolment Policy

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established an [Enrolment Policy](#)† which is implemented by all systemic schools in the Diocese.

The implementation of this policy is monitored by the Catholic Schools Office.

†Copies of this policy and other policies in this report may be obtained from the Catholic Schools Office website at: <http://www.cso.brokenbay.catholic.edu.au/resources/index.html> or by contacting the Catholic Schools Office.

2.4 Staff Profile

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

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

a	b	c	Total
13	0	0	13

2.5 Teacher Attendance and Retention Rates

The average teacher attendance rate during 2008 was 96.6%. This figure does not include teachers on planned leave.



The teacher retention rate from 2007 to 2008 was 75.0%.

2.6 Teacher Satisfaction

Teachers commented on the sense of community and cohesion among the staff. Events such as regular staff prayer, professional learning opportunities, the school musical and World Youth Day have led to a strengthened sense of staff unity. Staff members have acknowledged the approachable nature of the Leadership Team and the support which is provided to classroom teachers.

2.7 Student Attendance

The average student attendance rate for 2008 was 93%.

2.8 Student Satisfaction

The students report that our school provides many opportunities to use technology. They enjoy learning new skills and being creative with Photo Shop, Kids Pix and Word Art creating great PowerPoint displays and artworks.

They also like participating in extra activities that are available at school such as the Photography Exhibition, Sporting Competitions, Carnivals, Premier's Reading Challenge, Spirituality and Leadership days and excursions. All students enjoyed the Dance Fever program and were very excited when the school came third overall in the NSW Dance Fever Competition.

The Year 6 students report very positively about the Buddy System. They like helping the Kindergarten students settle into school and being a friend they can always come to. Throughout the year they read to them, help them pack their bags, tie their shoe laces and hold their hands. They feel a great sense of responsibility to help them learn and to be a role model.





3. Catholic Life and Mission

3.1 Catholic Heritage

Maria Regina Catholic School has a rich past and was opened by the Good Samaritan Sisters in 1959. The school both then and today continues to "strive to make a difference."

The life of the school is based on Gospel values where the worth of each individual is recognised. Students are encouraged to respond to the invitation of the call to Catholic discipleship. This is achieved by a reflective response to God's action in our world and particularly in our lives. All members of the Leadership Team are faithful Catholics who are ready to embrace the mission of the Catholic school today and to lead and inspire their staff and parents.

3.2 Religious Life of the School



A strong emphasis on prayer, liturgy and Eucharistic celebration is evident within the Maria Regina community. Students attend regular parish and school masses and experience the first rite of Reconciliation each term. Family Masses have been celebrated each term providing a rewarding opportunity for both school and parish to celebrate together. Maria Regina is actively involved in the parish sacramental programs for Confirmation, Reconciliation and Eucharist.

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

Partnership between the school and parish is highly valued and was further strengthened by the events surrounding World Youth Day. During the week of World Youth Day, Maria Regina Catholic School hosted over 100 pilgrims from Belgium. Parishioners worked collaboratively with the entire staff of the school to coordinate accommodation, meals, transport, OH&S aspects and liturgical celebrations. The staff, school community and parish worked tirelessly to ensure our international visitors had a memorable experience while in Australia.

3.4 Catholic Worldview

As a Catholic school, Maria Regina seeks to strengthen a shared understanding of the central purpose of our school by modelling the Gospel values of inclusion, compassion, human dignity, justice and service as declared in the school's Mission Statement. There is a deep commitment to working together to build a community of disciples of Jesus. We proclaim the message by promoting a Catholic worldview, which embraces the presence of God in our daily life, the Eucharist, the Sacred Scripture and the living tradition of the Church. The Catholic worldview is carefully embedded in the whole curriculum promoting an obligation to work to create social and environmental conditions that promote the care and respect of every person and all of creation.

The Photography Competition, 'Catholic Worldview – Through the Lens of a Child' was run again in 2008 with entries from our school at Avalon and Sacred Heart, Mona Vale. Photos could be entered into a number of categories which portrayed a Catholic Worldview.

In 2008 our school strengthened our focus on social justice with the formation of a Maria Regina Social Justice Team. This team consists of various staff members, the school Principal, the REC, the School Consultant and a number of parents. One Social Justice team member attends cluster and diocesan social justice meetings to broaden our knowledge and initiatives surrounding this important area. Our school strengthened our affiliation with East Timor hosting a day of activities on East Timor's Independence Day as a way of raising awareness of our needy neighbours. Activities included guest speakers, visual art and music activities, language activities and fundraising. Maria



Regina Catholic School also invited the Sisters of the Charities of Missionaries (Mother Teresa's Order) to speak to the student body about their work in Sydney and throughout the world.

During the year students and families have responded to community and global needs through dialogue, prayer and service. The school has supported the St Vincent de Paul Winter and Christmas Hamper Appeals, Project Compassion during Lent, Catholic Mission during Mission Week, and the ALOLA Foundation (East Timor).

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.

The Religious Education Coordinator informs staff of upcoming courses offered by the Broken Bay Institute as well as inviting them to attend in-services in other religious domains such as liturgy and spirituality. In 2008 a Staff Development Day was dedicated to a course developed by Myers Briggs on personality type. This provided an opportunity for staff members to learn more about each other and how our different personalities affect our relationships with one another. The Religious Education Coordinator also ensures that the Religious Education accreditation of teachers has been completed or is in the process of being completed for each staff member.



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

The school's Discipline and Pastoral Care Policies were reviewed and updated during Term 2 to reflect our new approach to behaviour management.

Our school Behaviour Management Policy takes into account the Diocesan Pastoral Care Policy and Student Discipline Policy for Diocesan systemic schools in that our approach to discipline has its basis in our pastoral care for each other.

We adopted a whole school approach to bring about positive behaviour called Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL). This approach has a strong emphasis on teaching appropriate behaviours and providing systems of support to bring about these positive behaviours. This policy recognises that staff, students and parents all share the responsibility for behaviour management, with a positive and pastoral outlook for all.

4.3 Pastoral Care of Families

Maria Regina has supportive and welcoming class parent representatives who support the school community by acting as a link between the classroom, teacher and parents. Their role within the school engages the community to promote pastoral care such as welcoming new families and fostering new relationships between parents and students. In 2008 a Class Parent Coordinator was elected to oversee the various roles of our class parents.

A parent representative of the school attended Parent Council information meetings which were held on four occasions throughout the year.

Maria Regina students have access to a school counsellor if necessary. The school can also assist parents in acquiring suitable counselling for families through Centacare. Families affected by the financial crisis and who may have been struggling to meet school fee payments were offered flexibility in regards to account deadlines.

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

All students are able to experience learning that is relevant, stimulating, and developmental.

Curriculum integration is embedded into the teaching and learning. Each term one innovative, purposeful, inquiry based unit of work is completed by each stage. Life skills and thinking skills are taught in conjunction with learning and cooperative group work.

Children at Maria Regina have additional support, where necessary, from a learning support teacher, learning support assistants, small group tuition and volunteer helpers.

The staff reviewed their beliefs about teaching and learning in 2008. Classroom teachers developed a common understanding about how children learn and the necessary strategies that need to be implemented for effective learning to take place.

Teaching programs were shared and reviewed. Teachers recognised the need to program consistently and programming frameworks were trialled and amended.

Programs reflected a differentiated approach to teaching and learning which recognises that children have different learning styles and needs. Teachers also recognised the importance of developing children's thinking skills to add depth to their knowledge and understanding.

Students who have been identified as being gifted were able to develop their individual strengths by having the opportunity to experience different learning journeys, such as using Thinkers Keys. An enrichment group was established for gifted readers. These children met once a week in a share book club completing activities using the 'William Matrix' model.

Teachers continued to use home learning grids to support the development of students' independence as learners at home. Teachers place great importance around fostering essential life skills at home. The grids are completed over a two week cycle and differentiated to suit individual needs.

The integration of technology into teaching and learning continues to be a strong focus. Two classrooms have interactive white boards. These boards are used to enhance lessons and support learning using interactive games. All students have access to computers in their classroom, a bank of ten desktops in the library and the use of twenty-five laptops.

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 exempt from a test were deemed not to have met the national minimum standard.
- In the 2008 cohort, there were 22 students in Year 3 and 6 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	9	5	27	45	14	100
	National	6.1	12	17.7	23	21.7	17.7	92.1
Writing	School	0	0	9	9	36	45	100
	National	2.9	6.5	15.6	28.7	27.4	17.2	95.4
Spelling	School	0	9	5	18	41	27	100
	National	5.9	10	19	25.9	21.9	15.5	92.4
Grammar & Punctuation	School	0	0	14	27	32	27	100
	National	6.6	10.7	17.3	23.3	21.3	19.1	91.7
Numeracy	School	0	5	14	36	27	18	100
	National	3.3	10.9	22.9	28	20.9	12.4	95.0

It was pleasing to note that the percentage of students achieving Bands 5 and 6 (and at 5 and 6 combined) was higher than the national figures in every test area (except reading at Band 6). The NAPLAN results at Year 3 indicate that current teaching programs and intervention strategies are working effectively to support students' skills and knowledge in all areas of literacy and numeracy.

Approaches to the teaching of reading will be reviewed in 2009 and some changes to support whole school reading programs may be deemed necessary. The challenge in numeracy will be to develop student knowledge and skills by providing explicit teaching in targeted areas that need to be strengthened.

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	17	17	50	0	17	0	83
	National	7.5	13.6	23.9	26	18.1	9.3	90.9
Writing	School	0	0	33	33	17	17	100
	National	5.9	11.8	25.3	29.3	17.9	8.3	92.5
Spelling	School	17	0	33	33	17	0	83
	National	6.8	12.8	24.9	28.2	18.2	7.6	91.7
Grammar & Punctuation	School	0	17	17	32	17	17	100
	National	6.6	11	21.2	26.4	19.9	13.4	91.9
Numeracy	School	0	17	50	33	0	0	100
	National	5.9	17.4	28.9	25.7	13.9	6.6	92.6

Band distributions at Year 5 must be considered within the context of a small cohort. Fifty per cent of this cohort received additional support for literacy and numeracy.

Extensive support was given to fifty per cent of students for reading with individual support, extra guided reading sessions and explicit modelling sessions completed daily. A review of reading strategies K- 6 will continue to support this group of students.

Other results in literacy and numeracy indicate good teaching practices. More explicit modelling and the setting of higher expectations are needed in order to improve student skills in all areas.



5.3 Extracurricular Activities

Music

This year Maria Regina presented a whole school musical, "It's About Time". The musical spectacular involved all students Kindergarten to Year 6, staff and the parent community. A professional DVD was produced.

Band

This year the training band and concert band continued to grow and performed at whole school events and musical evenings. An inaugural band camp was held with several other peninsula schools in preparation for performing at the Mater Maria Catholic College Marana Music Festival.

5.4 Professional Learning

All teachers participated in a range of professional learning activities.

The school's focus for professional learning was informed by the annual goals which specifically targeted Mathematics and Science.

Members of the leadership team and co-ordinators attended meetings to analyse NAPLAN data and look at our future direction to raise standards in Mathematics.

As Mathematics was one of our main focus areas, several staff in-services were held to motivate staff and ensure common understanding and mathematical language. Mentoring of new staff members in the area of Mathematics also occurred as part of our Professional Learning.

Professional learning at extended staff meetings included:

- Implementation of Science in Primary Literacy Project (SIPS)
- Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL).

Staff Development Days included:

- Friendly Schools Friendly Families
- Myers Briggs Personality Type
- Two of our teachers attended the Certificate of Primary Mathematics Education course facilitated by the University of Sydney
- The Assistant Principal and the Religious Education Co-ordinator attended the Catholic Schools Office Leadership Course for Middle Managers
- The Principal and Assistant Principal attended the Covey's Seven Habits of Highly Effective People
- Several staff attended training in the use of interactive whiteboards.

The average expenditure on professional learning, per teacher, in 2008 was \$1,750.



6. Strategic Initiatives

6.1 2008 Priorities and Achievements

- **To promote the identity of Maria Regina School as an integral part of the parish.**

We achieved this by regular newsletter inclusions and liaising with the Parish Priest and other parish staff through regular meeting and attendance at Parish Council Meetings. This resulted in co-operatively planned parish liturgies and community participation.

- **To further strengthen our links with East Timor.**

During 2008 we hosted East Timorese orphans and funds were raised through the sale of East Timor handicrafts. A Social Justice Team was established and held regular meetings.

- **To develop a shared understanding of commitment to Behaviour Management.**

The school embraced the Positive Behaviour for Learning Program (PBL) and as a result has reviewed the Pastoral Care Policy. Constant practice Kindergarten to Year 6 has been a focus of staff development.

- **To develop a more consistent use of Information, Communication and Learning Technology in Religious Education.**

The Religious Education Coordinator worked with individual teachers to upskill them in this area. Parents reported satisfaction of children's interaction in their Religious Education through information, communication and learning technologies.

6.2 2009 Priorities and Challenges

- Provide opportunities for a parent forum to further understand the whole school commitment to Positive Behaviour for Learning.
- To continue to gather and analyse a range of student work samples and performance and reflectively develop an action plan for future learning. Special focus will be given to numeracy.
- To ensure interactive whiteboards are used effectively to support student learning.
- To engage the community in the articulation of what it means to be Catholic in a contemporary society.
- To ensure ongoing compliance.



7. Parent Participation

7.1 Introduction

The Parents' & Friends' Association (P & F) has a very strong working relationship with the school Principal and staff. The P & F is responsible for helping to raise funds for the school for new and updated equipment and resources. In the past twelve months the P & F have purchased interactive whiteboards.

The school was successful in obtaining a grant for the installation of water saving devices such as rain water tanks and new toilets. The P & F has agreed to put funds towards refurbishing the toilet blocks and undercroft to help complete this project.

In conjunction with helping to raise funds for the school the P & F plays a major role in helping to build a warm, friendly and positive school community by organising social events for all families to attend and assisting with pastoral care if needed.

A group of nominated class parents, K to 6, liaised with class teachers and the P & F Social Committee to organise parent support in the classroom, including excursions, fund raisers, pastoral care, literacy, art, numeracy and social events. These groups provided a network of opportunity for valuable community interaction throughout the school.

The parents were also invaluable in their assistance with the World Youth Day pilgrims.

Parent participation is highly valued at Maria Regina. Parents contribute to the consultation process including policy development and strategic planning.

7.2 Parent Satisfaction

Through discussions and feedback from parents in the process of the Principal's contract renewal, it has been noted that the parents value the building of cohesive community where clear boundaries and expectations are understood and shared. They have confidence and trust in the leadership of the school and are very positive about the streamlining structures and processes that enhance effective communication, consultation and inclusion. They commend the open communication between staff and the availability of staff to discuss needs and concerns.



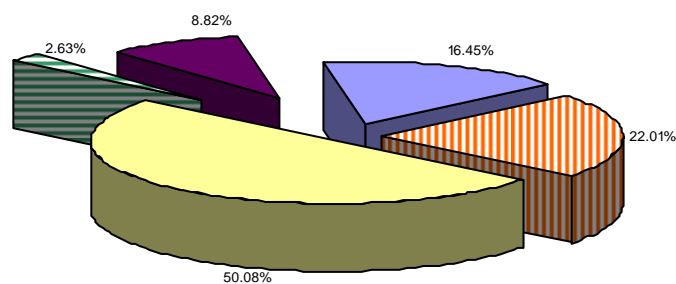
8. Financial Report

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

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

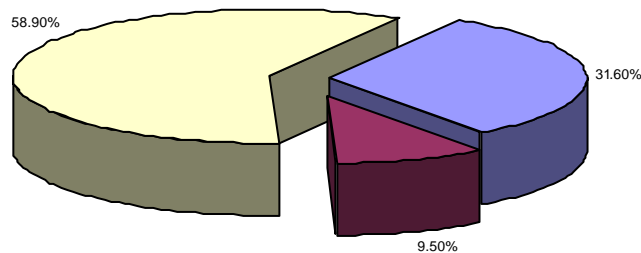
Income

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



Expenditure

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



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