



CATHOLIC EDUCATION
Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn

Annual School Report to the Community 2015



**St Thomas Aquinas
West Belconnen**

St Thomas Aquinas Primary School West Belconnen

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Principal

Mr Cameron Johns

Section One: Message from Key Groups in our Community

Principal's Message

St Thomas Aquinas Primary School is located in the heart of West Belconnen. It serves a diverse and expanding population, with many young families moving into the area. Our school has been expanding in recent years, and in 2015 we increased from eleven to twelve classes. The school employs a part-time music teacher and a guitar teacher for the students in Years 4, 5 and 6. In light of the growth of the school, a building works program commenced at the beginning of Term 3. This program seeks to add three new classrooms, turn an existing classroom into a breakout space, refurbish some toilets and extend the library into the centre of the school. We also aim to begin a sensory playground, catering for the needs of our students. The school also employs a Spanish teacher who teaches children from Kindergarten - Grade 6. In 2010, the Early Learning Centre (ELC) opened and the school now offers full time and part-time Preschool classes.

Parent Body Message

The St Thomas School Community council has had its inaugural year this year when the old school board and the P & F association were combined to become more community based with a stronger emphasis on our whole school community. The role of the Community Council is to serve the school community by providing advice and assistance to the principal and School Leadership Team about the school community in general. The council is made up of parent, school and church representatives which enable different and well balanced views and suggestions. The Council meets twice a term for a closed meeting and once a term for an open meeting where any interested party may attend. The Council aims to assist wherever they can to ensure that the school is the best it can be, whether that is academically, socially or spiritually for the students, staff, parents and community.

Student Body Message

St Thomas Aquinas is a great school and we really like it. The teachers are all really nice and look after us. They support us and help us to be the best we can be. At St Thomas Aquinas, we get to do fun things, like go on camp and have different clubs at lunchtime. The teachers help us to do things we are good at. When you are in Year 5 or 6, you also get to make your Confirmation. We love St Thomas Aquinas Primary School.

Section Two: School Features

St Thomas Aquinas Primary School is a Catholic systemic Co-educational School located in West Belconnen.

St Thomas Aquinas Primary School is a Catholic Primary School located in West Belconnen. The school caters for students in Preschool - Year 6, and has a current enrolment of 295 students. Students attending this school come from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities consisting of 182 male and 134 female students; 11 indigenous students; and 42 with a Language Background other than English (LBOTE).

The school employs 40 staff comprising 21 teachers and 13 non-teaching staff, the latter being employed in a variety of capacities including Learning Support Assistants, Early Learning Centre assistants, front office staff, a canteen manager and School Welfare Officer. No staff identify as Indigenous.

The school has traditionally had a very stable teacher population. In recent years, however, there has been a large turnover of staff, with long serving staff members retiring and new teachers being employed by the school. This has led to a re-visioning of the school's purpose and vision, which, when combined with the growth and subsequent building plans, means that the school is going through an exciting phase of growth and regeneration. It is anticipated that the school will continue to grow and be two-stream from Kindergarten to Year 6 by 2018.

The school's website can be found at: <http://staquinas.act.edu.au/>

Section Three: Catholic Identity and Faith Formation

Our school follows the Archdiocesan Religious Education Curriculum, *Treasures New and Old*.

Religious Life & Religious Education

St Thomas Aquinas follows the Archdiocesan Religious Education Curriculum, *Treasures New and Old*. St Thomas Aquinas has a rich tradition of Catholic faith education. The school faithfully attends Mass every Thursday morning with the Parish. Fr Neville Drinkwater, the foundation Parish Priest, has for forty extraordinary years served the parish and the school. His contributions have been enormous and we are very lucky to have him as our Parish Priest. Sr Colleen Howe is the Parish associate and is also very involved in the school. The staff pray together every morning and spend some professional development time each year developing their spirituality and faith awareness. The school covers all the curriculum areas of *Treasures New and Old* and also provides opportunities for students to receive the Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist and Confirmation.

Section Four: Student Profile

Student Enrolment

The School caters for students in Kindergarten to Year 6. Students attending this School come from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities. The following information describes the student profile for 2015:

| Girls | Boys | LBOTE* | Total Students |
|-------|------|--------|----------------|
| 128 | 168 | 54 | 296 |

* Language Background Other than English

Enrolment Policy

The Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn has established an *Enrolment Policy for Catholic Schools*. The Catholic Education Office monitors the implementation of this policy. The policy has been developed in the context of government and system requirements.

Information about enrolling in a Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn may be accessed at the [Catholic Education Office](#) website.

Student Attendance Rates

The average student attendance rate for 2015 was 92.85%. Attendance rates disaggregated by Year group are shown in the following table.

| Attendance rates by Year group | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Kindergarten | 93% |
| Year 1 | 93% |
| Year 2 | 93% |
| Year 3 | 94% |
| Year 4 | 94% |
| Year 5 | 93% |
| Year 6 | 90% |

Managing Student Non-attendance

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. The School, in partnership with parents, is responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, School staff, as part of their duty of care, monitor part or whole day absences.

School staff, under the Principal's leadership, support the regular attendance of students by:

- providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the School community;
- maintaining accurate records of student attendance;
- recognising and rewarding excellent and improved student attendance;
- implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise.

The Principal is responsible for supporting the regular attendance of students by ensuring that:

- parents and students are regularly informed of attendance requirements and the

- consequences of unsatisfactory attendance;
- all cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies are implemented;
 - documented plans are developed to address the needs of students whose attendance is identified as being of concern;
 - the Catholic Education Office designated School Services Officer is provided with regular information about students for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue and for whom School strategies have failed to restore regular attendance.

Section Five: Staffing Profile

The following information describes the staffing profile for 2015:

| Total Teaching Staff* | Total Non-Teaching Staff | Combined Total |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| 19 | 6 | 25 |

* This number includes 15 full-time teachers and 4 part-time teachers.

| | |
|--|----|
| Percentage of staff who are Indigenous | 0% |
|--|----|

Professional Learning

All staff participated in the Professional Development week at the beginning of the year, which included revising the Code of Conduct, undergoing First Aid training (a refresher), and undergoing a mentored course in 'How to Have Difficult Conversations'. Throughout the year, staff attended CE sessions on literacy and numeracy. A major highlight of the year were teachers attending a Understanding by Design (UbD) course in Melbourne, with the intention of leading staff in its implementation. In addition to this PD, all staff had the opportunity to explore PD opportunities.

Teacher Qualifications

All teachers are qualified as required by the relevant authorities.

Section Six: Academic Profile

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an annual assessment for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. NAPLAN assessment results provide valuable information about student achievements in literacy and numeracy. An analysis of these results assists School planning and is used to support teaching and learning programs.

The tables below show the percentages of students who achieved particular skill bands in numeracy and the aspects of literacy. The School results shown are compared to students nationally. Literacy is reported in four content strands (aspects): Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation. Numeracy is reported as a single content strand.

| NAPLAN RESULTS 2015 | | % of students in the top 2 bands | | % of students in the bottom 2 bands | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| | | School | Australia | School | Australia |
| Year 3 | Reading | 27% | 48% | 8% | 11% |
| | Writing | 32% | 47% | 15% | 7% |
| | Spelling | 18% | 41% | 22% | 15% |
| | Grammar and Punctuation | 20% | 52% | 18% | 11% |
| | Numeracy | 27% | 34% | 21% | 15% |

| NAPLAN RESULTS 2015 | | % of students in the top 2 bands | | % of students in the bottom 2 bands | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| | | School | Australia | School | Australia |
| Year 5 | Reading | 31% | 34% | 23% | 18% |
| | Writing | 17% | 19% | 20% | 18% |
| | Spelling | 33% | 33% | 31% | 15% |
| | Grammar and Punctuation | 19% | 36% | 22% | 17% |
| | Numeracy | 11% | 28% | 17% | 16% |

Section Seven: School Review and Improvement

Each year, the School develops an Annual Improvement Plan indicating the intended key improvements for student learning outcomes. The plan is drawn from the School's Strategic Plan and informed by the Internal School Review process. The School engages in an annual evidence-based evaluation of its effectiveness against these external standards in collaboration with the Regional Consultant.

Key Improvements Achieved in 2015

Celebrating Catholic Identity:

- Develop a new school prayer and school song,
- Build staff capacity in designing sustaining and engaging liturgy,
- Build staff capacity in understanding of roles as teachers of Religious Education.

Transforming Teaching and Learning:

- Implement the Australian curriculum with rigour,
- Celebrate and encourage student engagement in academic life and use feedback to build capacity of teaching and learning,
- Use the Principles of Learning to refine teaching, learning and programming, refine program proformas, implement iPad program for Year 4 students, implement UbD trial.

Developing leaders:

- Staff professional Learning Plans/TQI/AITSL collaboration, differentiated Staff PD; develop student leadership; develop the School Community Council and continue Kids Matter PD.

Developing Relationships:

- Work more closely with outside agencies including other local schools, refine and work on communication practices with parents and develop ways to publicly celebrate staff and school members' successes.

Cultivating Growth:

- Master plan and building project
- Induction and transition of staff

Priority Key Improvements for 2016

Area 1: Implement LAMP project (Leading and Mentoring Project). This sees five staff volunteer to undergo eight Professional Development days (two a term) which enable them to mentor four to five other staff, to whom they are assigned. The staff are mentored in terms of their TQI goals.

Area 2: Literacy: Inquiry Literacy Block. This sees all staff change the way they teach literacy, and it is based on an inquiry method developed by Professor Kaye Lowe.

Area 3: Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Project. A team of staff will investigate the possibilities of a school designed and based SEL program for children, with the aim to improve the social and emotional well being of our students.

Section Eight: School Policies

Student Welfare Policy

St Thomas Aquinas' Behaviour Management Policy is designed to keep all students safe, deal with conflicts justly, and restore to health relationships that are troubled. All complaints made by children are taken very seriously by all members of staff and the school has no tolerance for any kind of violence. We believe that all students can live and work harmoniously. Where needed, the Assistant Principal or Principal will contact parents and arrange meetings in order to assist students to contribute positively to the school and its culture.

Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited in this school. In addition we do not sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons to enforce discipline at our school. The full text of the school's Behaviour Management Policy is available on the school website or from the Front Office.

The full text of the School's Student Welfare Policy may be accessed on the School's website or at the Administration office.

Complaints and Grievances Resolution Policy

The Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn Catholic Education Office has established a *Complaints Policy* which is implemented by our school and all systemic schools in the Archdiocese. The rationale for the policy is that within the reality of the schooling experience, it is recognised that, from time to time, misunderstandings and differences of opinion will occur, and that these need to be resolved satisfactorily. Addressing such matters within a framework of dignity, respect and truth can provide powerful opportunities to model the love of Christ in the reality of our contemporary world. The Catholic Education Office (CEO) monitors the implementation of this policy.

The full text of the *Complaints Policy* may be accessed on the Catholic Education website at <https://cg.catholic.edu.au>.

The school follows the Catholic Education Policy as listed on the CE website. The school policy is based on procedural fairness and recognises that parents and caregivers must have access to processes that allow them to resolve concerns in a supportive and conciliatory environment. Any concerns raised are responded to promptly and fairly and confidentiality is always maintained. A full text of the school policy is available on the school website or from the Front Office.

Section Nine: Community Satisfaction

The opinions and ideas of parents, students and teachers are valued and sought. Their suggestions are incorporated into planning for and achieving improved outcomes for students. This year, the School has used a variety of processes to gain information about the level of satisfaction with the School from parents, students and teachers.

Parent Satisfaction

Parents speak particularly highly of the welcoming nature of the school and the manner in which all staff attempt to look after children and their needs. Parents also appreciate the efforts in communication and the approachability of the staff. There is a strong sense of parent community and solidarity and a high degree of pride in the school.

Parents would like some of the Learning Support initiatives to be expanded into the older grades. They would also like some attention to be paid to the grounds and if possible, increase some shade areas with the school.

When asked, what do you most want for your child, parents responded that they most wanted a relaxed, safe, and happy learning environment at school, and that their children are happy at school. They want their child to be well equipped with their learning and to strive to always do their best.

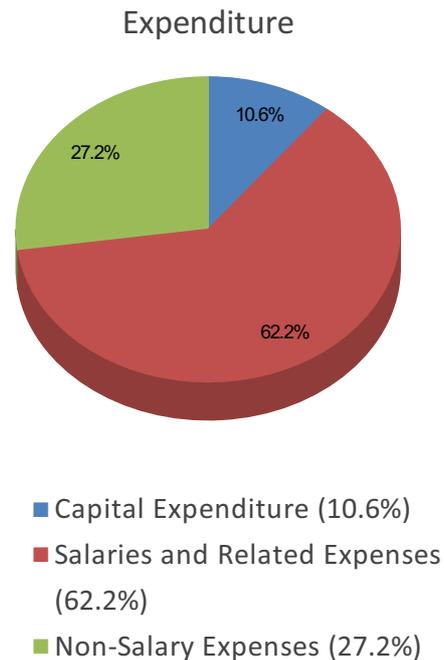
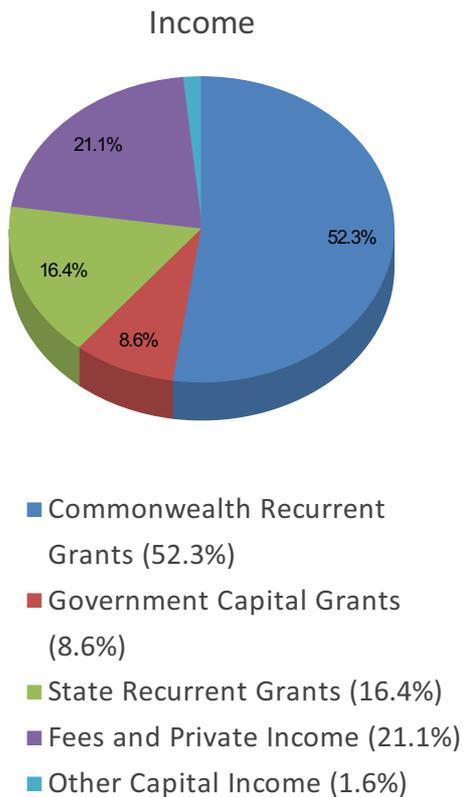
Student Satisfaction

Students indicated that they were happy at school and enjoyed their time in the classroom and on the playground. They all feel that their teachers like and support them. Areas to focus on include making sure that all children feel safe in all areas of the school, and to provide greater scope to playground equipment and the like.

Teacher Satisfaction

Teachers indicated that feel happy and supported in their jobs and roles. They feel that the school does a good job in supporting them in their growth and in their capacity to meet the needs of children. Further development in this area includes further Professional Development in the area of special needs and behaviour management. Staff appreciate the friendly, collaborative and friendly feel amongst the staff, and appreciate the efforts of everyone in looking after each staff member.

Section Ten: Financial Statement



| RECURRENT and CAPITAL INCOME | |
|--|--------------------|
| Commonwealth Recurrent Grants ¹ | \$1,927,027 |
| Government Capital Grants ² | \$315,234 |
| State Recurrent Grants ³ | \$603,969 |
| Fees and Private Income ⁴ | \$776,011 |
| Other Capital Income ⁵ | \$59,455 |
| Total Income | \$3,681,696 |

| RECURRENT and CAPITAL EXPENDITURE | |
|--|--------------------|
| Capital Expenditure ⁶ | \$374,689 |
| Salaries and Related Expenses ⁷ | \$2,198,007 |
| Non-Salary Expenses ⁸ | \$963,608 |
| Total Expenditure | \$3,536,304 |

Notes

1. Commonwealth Recurrent Grants includes recurrent per capita grants and special purpose grants.
2. Government Capital Grants includes all capital grants received from the Commonwealth and State Governments.
3. State Recurrent Grants includes recurrent grants per capita, special purpose grants and interest subsidy grants.
4. Fees and Private Income include Archdiocesan and school based fees, excursions and other private income.
5. Other Capital Income includes building levy fees and capital donations used to fund Capital Expenditure.
6. Capital Expenditure includes expenditure on School Buildings, and Furniture

and Equipment.

7. Salaries and Related Expenditure includes all salaries, allowances and related expenses such as superannuation and workers compensation insurance.
8. Non-Salary Expenses include all other Non-Salary Recurrent Expenditure covering resources, administration, operational expenses, utilities, repairs and maintenance.