



CATHOLIC EDUCATION
Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn

ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY 2017



**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 the last four years we have grown in population, from 236 students in 2013 to 335 at the end of 2017. The school employs a part-time music teacher and a guitar teacher for the students in Years 5 and 6. 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. We pride ourselves on being an inclusive and warm school community, whose teachers strive at all times to meet children in their journeys and to enable them to flourish as young human beings.

Parent Body Message

St Thomas Aquinas School Community Council (SCC) is now in its fourth year of existence. While very young in age, the SCC has contributed to and supported many great initiatives in the school including the annual school fete, purchase of new library furniture and goal posts, and community/social events such as movie nights, mother's/father's day, lessons and carols and more. A key role for the SCC's is to represent the school community by providing advice to the Principal and School Leadership Team. Examples of such advice includes input regarding uniform changes and advice in relation to particular school policies. Additionally to better support incoming initiatives, the SCC will form sub committees of parent volunteers based on a need/request within the community. This includes:

- long term ongoing activities such as the fete and social events committee
- short term activities that focus on defined tasks with specific timeframes which requires volunteers and leadership.

The SCC is made up of a small friendly group of parents and staff who give generously of their time to ensure the school is the best it can be for the students.

Student Body Message

St Thomas Aquinas Primary School is a friendly school which helps all of its students. Our teachers are very nice and friendly and they help us learn to the best of our ability. We go on camps in year 5 and Year 6 and the Year 6 students get to be school leaders and take part in different leadership groups. We also have fun lunch time clubs, like Robotics. Our sport carnivals are always fun and we can compete in the PSSA competitions if we are good enough. Our school always encourages us to be our best and we love it.

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 Charnwood, West Belconnen. The school caters for students in Preschool - Year 6, and has a current enrolment of 313 students.

Students attending this school come from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities, including students from India, Sri Lanka, Croatia and the South Sudan.

The school employs 40 staff comprising of teachers and non-teaching staff, the latter being employed in a variety of capacities including Learning Support Assistants, Early Learning Centre assistants, front office staff.

The school has traditionally had a very stable teacher population. In recent years, however, there has been a turnover of staff, with long serving staff members retiring and new teachers being employed by the school. This has led to a envisioning 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. This year, we opened our new extensions, which included 3 new classrooms, a break-out space, refurbished toilets and an extension of the library. The school also refurbished its courtyard and added two new sandpits. Next year, it is anticipated that we will extend the car park, to allow for the greater volume of cars that the school has seen over the last few years. 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 served the parish and the school for forty-two extraordinary years. 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 its 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 2017:

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Total Students
144	191	55	335

* 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 2017 was 92.84%. Attendance rates disaggregated by Year group are shown in the following table.

Attendance rates by Year group	
Kindergarten	92%
Year 1	95%
Year 2	94%
Year 3	93%
Year 4	94%
Year 5	92%
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 2017:

Total Teaching Staff*	Total Non-Teaching Staff	Combined Total
23	4	27

* This number includes 17 full-time teachers and 6 part-time teachers.

Percentage of staff who are Indigenous	0%
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Professional Learning

All teachers have been involved in professional learning during the year. These activities are designed to develop the skills and understandings of staff to improve student outcomes. Professional learning can take many forms including whole staff days, subject specific inservices, meetings and conferences. At the beginning of the year, the staff held five PD days, including a day led by Kaye Lowe on literacy, a spirituality day led by the school's REC, a day at the 'Students Yearn to Learn' Conference, a day administered by Kath Murdoch, and an administration and code of conduct day.

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 2017		% of students in the top 2 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	Australia	School	Australia
Year 3	Reading	24%	52%	18%	10%
	Writing	24%	45%	22%	8%
	Spelling	26%	46%	40%	13%
	Grammar and Punctuation	36%	56%	26%	11%
	Numeracy	16%	40%	26%	11%

NAPLAN RESULTS 2017		% of students in the top 2 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	Australia	School	Australia
Year 5	Reading	16%	37%	27%	15%
	Writing	5%	16%	39%	19%
	Spelling	9%	34%	33%	14%
	Grammar and Punctuation	9%	34%	33%	18%
	Numeracy	4%	28%	22%	15%

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 2017

Our 2017 improvement agenda concentrated on building upon the successes and work of 2016. Specifically, we focused on our Social and Emotional Learning program (SEL), our Leadership and Mentor Program (LAMP) and further refining our use of the inquiry based literacy block. In all areas we experienced success, with our English pedagogical skills improving in the implementation of our English block; our SEL program continued to grow in strength with the introduction of a reward system; and our LAMP program continued to reap rewards in teacher growth and professional development. The school was also successful in initiating a new, inquiry based approach to the teaching of Maths. This was begun in Term 3 and used Year 1 as the trial grade.

Priority Key Improvements for 2018

Our improvement priorities for 2018, as identified in our Annual Improvement Plan, include the following:

1. To differentiate our teaching, particularly in English and Maths
2. To use baseline data in English and Maths to inform practice
3. To have 75% of students achieve at or great than expected growth over two years, from Year 3 to Year 5, as represented by NAPLAN data.

In addition, St Thomas Aquinas will continue to build upon its success in 2017 with inquiry Maths, and seek to continue to implement the approach across the school. The school is also looking to improve the grounds, with the front garden area being redesigned and some shade structures being installed in the playground.

Section Eight: School Policies

Student Welfare Policy

St Thomas Aquinas' Behaviour Management and Student Welfare 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 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>.

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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

The parent survey revealed that the parent body, on the whole, were very satisfied with St Thomas Aquinas. Areas that parents were particularly happy with the accessibility of all staff and the quality of the education provided for the children. Parents believed that the school was authentically Catholic and they appreciated the dedication and commitment of the staff and they believe that the school does the best it can for the students and acts with the students' best interests at heart.

There were two areas that the parent body identified as possible areas of improvement. The parent body felt that more attention could be given to resourcing of the school, in terms of equipment for outside play and shade structures. Secondly, while certainly feeling that the school was a safe environment for their child or children, the parents also thought further development could be given to the Pastoral Care policy, in order to make it more effective and greater consistency could be applied to the application of the Pastoral Care policy.

Student Satisfaction

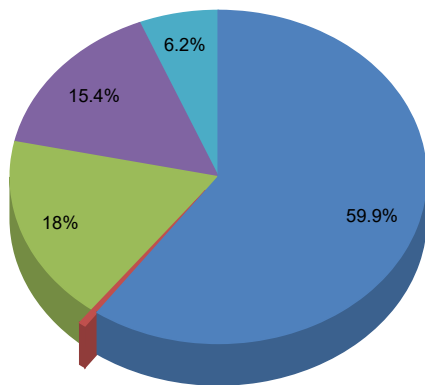
The student body generally reported very high levels of satisfaction with the school, stating in particular, that they felt that the teachers cared a great deal for them, that the teachers were fair and that the lessons were informative and fun. The students reported feeling safe at school and that the teachers were approachable and there for them, the students. They also felt that children generally got on well with each other and they appreciated the strong anti-bullying messages and the lunchtime clubs. A major area of improvement was a desire to see more sporting activities and facilities at the school, for example, genuine soccer posts.

Teacher Satisfaction

Like the parent and student bodies, the teachers and staff at St Thomas Aquinas reported a high degree of satisfaction. They all feel very strongly that their work is of great importance and they value what they do for the children a great deal. Similarly, they feel that their work is appreciated and valued by the leadership of the school, their colleagues, the parent body and the students. Areas of improvement might include finding ways to reduce the paperwork load for staff and finding new and more effective ways to communicate. Staff would also like to see the number of meetings be reduced, if at all possible, whilst also recognising that it is not always possible to do so.

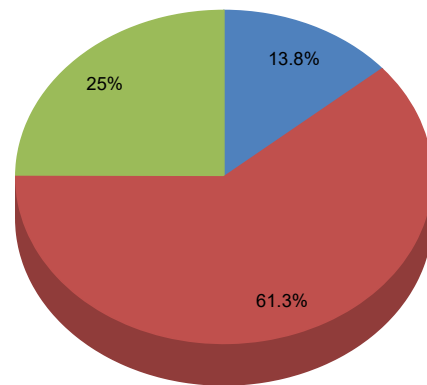
Section Ten: Financial Statement

Income



- Commonwealth Recurrent Grants (59.9%)
- Government Capital Grants (0.5%)
- State Recurrent Grants (18%)
- Fees and Private Income (15.4%)
- Other Capital Income (6.2%)

Expenditure



- Capital Expenditure (13.8%)
- Salaries and Related Expenses (61.3%)
- Non-Salary Expenses (25%)

RECURRENT and CAPITAL INCOME	
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants ¹	\$2,514,222
Government Capital Grants ²	\$20,960
State Recurrent Grants ³	\$756,421
Fees and Private Income ⁴	\$648,534
Other Capital Income ⁵	\$259,282
Total Income	\$4,199,419

RECURRENT and CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	
Capital Expenditure ⁶	\$614,775
Salaries and Related Expenses ⁷	\$2,738,700
Non-Salary Expenses ⁸	\$1,115,652
Total Expenditure	\$4,469,127

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.