SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION

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Principal: Mr John Bourke

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School Board / Council Chair: Mrs Anita Agett

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This report was prepared by:

Mr John Bourke

PRINCIPAL
MESSAGE FROM OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Principal’s Message
In 2012 at St Thomas Aquinas we continue to ‘Encourage the growth of each person through friendship with Jesus’. As a Catholic school from Preschool to Year 6 we continue to model and teach the story of Jesus and develop our Catholicity. We embrace the diverse needs of our broader community by encouraging, challenging and providing our students and their families with opportunities to grow intellectually, emotionally and socially. “Be the Hands and Heart of God” was chosen as the annual theme. All students from ELC to Year 6 have used this theme to celebrate together by living our faith commitment through the gospel values and relationships with each other.

School Board Message
At St Thomas Aquinas West Belconnen our motto ‘To care’ is central to our partnership between parents and the school. The Board has enjoyed another productive year working closely with the school Executive to manage the school budget and with the Parents and Friends Association to provide additional resources through our fundraising efforts with the support of our parents, staff and parish. Our Early Learning Centre (ELC) is now fully operational and continues to be a wonderful addition to our school with new students, parents and staff joining our community and continuing on into primary school.

Anita Agett
Chair of St Thomas Aquinas School Board

Parents and Friends Association Message
In October, St Thomas Aquinas proudly hosted the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn Catholic Primary Schools’ Netball Carnival. With the generous efforts and amazing determination of our committee and volunteers we were able to raise in the vicinity of $15,000.
For our part in the 9th annual Charny Carny held in March, St Thomas Aquinas received $10,000.

Measa Cox
President of the P & F

SCHOOL FEATURES

St Thomas Aquinas is a Catholic Primary School located in Charnwood. The school caters for students in Preschool - Year 6, and has a current enrolment of 265 students.

Students attending this school come from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities consisting of 57.7% male and 42.3% female students; 4% indigenous students; and 17.3% Language Background other than English (LBOTE).
The school employs thirty one staff comprising eighteen teachers and thirteen non-teaching staff, the latter being employed in a variety of capacities including learning support, administration and canteen management.

St Thomas Aquinas is well equipped with learning resources, specialised furniture catering for individual needs, interactive whiteboards in each classroom, thirty laptops and six iPads. Our school...
facilities reflect twenty first century learning spaces. St Thomas Aquinas prides itself on being an inclusive school where educational programs are differentiated to address the individual needs of each child. Our authentic links with the Parish are lived through our weekly attendance at Mass, Sr Colleen Howe’s active school involvement and the many parishioners who support our students with chess, art, reading and numeracy assistance.

St Thomas Aquinas is first and foremost a community and it has a very strong parent body. Parents are welcome to participate in all aspects of the school including:

• Parents and Friends Association
• School Board
• Classrooms and canteen assistants
• Excursions and special school events

St Thomas Aquinas strives to provide a safe, secure and caring environment. We work hard to develop effective partnerships with parents, families and the wider community. The school’s website can be found at www.staquinas.act.edu.au

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

St Thomas Aquinas Primary School follows the Archdiocesan Religious Education Curriculum, *Treasures New and Old*.

The Vision Statement for St Thomas Aquinas West Belconnen is "To encourage the growth of each person through friendship with Jesus”. We live our Vision in four main ways; through Faith, People, Education and Innovation. Our Vision for the future is to take the four Key Areas of our Mission Statement which encompasses our Vision Statement and shift our minds and hearts into the 21st Century. We endeavour to create a culture of inclusion and resilience so we can truly live out our Mission of Faith, Education Innovation and People.

Religious Education at St Thomas Aquinas combines the teaching of Treasures New and Old with the unplanned learning experiences of daily life. At St Thomas Aquinas the faith, spiritual and religious development of each person is paramount. We are privileged to have Father Neville Drinkwater, Sister Colleen Howe and our School Welfare Worker Jeanette Waterworth guiding the faith development of our community and providing pastoral support. Every Thursday morning all the students from the Early Learning Centre to Year Six participate in a celebration of the Eucharist. During the Mass the students are active participants: Proclaiming the Word, singing hymns and receiving Holy Communion or a blessing.

Personal and communal prayers are key components of the religious and pastoral life of St Thomas Aquinas. The staff gathers each morning for prayer and spiritual reflection. The whole school gathers together Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday mornings to pray our school prayer. Every classroom has a living prayer focus and the students are encouraged to participate and contribute, reflecting on their own life experiences and the needs of others in our school and world communities.
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT - NAPLAN

Students in Years 3 and 5 sat the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) in May this year. 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.

School and National Mean Scale Scores

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<td>National</td>
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<td>415</td>
<td>414</td>
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<td>494</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>488</td>
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<tr>
<td>School</td>
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<td>480.7</td>
<td>494.2</td>
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Proportion of students at or above the National Minimum Standard

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<td>National</td>
<td>94%</td>
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<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>83%</td>
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<td>National</td>
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<td>92%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>93%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>86%</td>
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Proportion of students in each Achievement Band

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<td>Band 6</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
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<td>Band 5</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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The above tables show a snapshot of our student achievement this year. These results will be the impetus for further curriculum change in 2013. A number of initiatives will be implemented to support our students to move into the upper achievement bands and move a larger proportion of students to attain at or above the National Standard. Future involvement in the National Partnerships program will enable a whole school approach to improve overall Literacy and Numeracy results.

**SCHOOL POLICIES**

**Enrolment Policy**

In enrolling students we are directed by the Archdiocesan Enrolment Policy which can be found on the Annual Report page of the school’s website or on the Catholic Education Office website at [http://www.ceocg.catholic.edu.au/parents/Pages/GeneralPolicies.aspx](http://www.ceocg.catholic.edu.au/parents/Pages/GeneralPolicies.aspx)

**Behaviour**

In 2012 St Thomas Aquinas has continued to implement a School Wide Positive Behaviour Program. This program promotes a happy and safe environment for all students, staff and families. Our school rules of ‘Stay Safe, Try your Best, Always be Respectful’ are the basis of our program. Through explicitly teaching and encouraging desired behaviours our students are able to clearly articulate what being safe, trying your best and being safe looks and sounds like. Through the rewarding of positive behaviours we have seen an increase in desired behaviours and a decline in undesired behaviours.

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 School Wide Positive Behaviour Program is available on the school website or from the Front Office.

**Complaints and Grievances Resolution Policy**

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.

**PRIORITIES AND TARGETS**

In 2012 St Thomas Aquinas participated in the Registration process. This, together with analysis of NAPLAN data provided the school with an opportunity to review past improvements achieved in student learning and to look ahead to further improvement. In 2012 our priority was a whole school focus on best teaching and learning practice in Reading and Numeracy. This year we implemented a whole school approach to teaching numeracy and developed a Numeracy Block agreed practice. In the junior school we implemented a word study program ‘Sound Waves’ designed to develop spelling and reading skills through the phonemic approach. It is anticipated that this program will be fully implemented across all grades in 2013.

In 2012 thirty laptops were purchased and staff participated in a number of professional learning activities to develop their skills in using this technology. We purchased three more iPads and observation of classroom practice would indicate that the staff and students have begun to embrace this new technology and are using it on a daily basis across all key learning areas. Additional professional development to further enhance pedagogy in using technology in the classroom will be a target for 2013.

In the analysis of NAPLAN, school-based assessment and student work samples, we have highlighted the areas of Literacy and Numeracy to be addressed in 2013. We will do this through:

- Developing whole school plans and agreed practices that reflect best practice of student learning.
- Implementation of a systematic, whole school word study program ‘Sound Waves’ designed to develop spelling and reading skills through the phonemic approach.
- Re-visiting the First Steps Reading and Writing program and investigating teaching strategies within SMART and school-based strategies to further improve our Literacy results across all grades.
- Continue to implement the targeted Reading Recovery program.
- Planning cross curricula units of work to support the National Curriculum.
- Consulting and investigating professional learning networks, curriculum support and Regional support to enhance and develop our teaching and learning priorities.
- Continue to explore, understand and implement the Australian Curriculum.
• 2013 will continue to see Numeracy Blocks being embedded into our daily teaching practice with a continued emphasis on brain based research and further work around building teacher capacity in their shared understanding of QTF

• 2013 will continue to see the embedding of the Mathematics and History Australian Curriculum and updating of the core document to reflect current practice

• We endeavour to foster the home and school partnerships in Literacy and Numeracy and continue to develop teacher capacity with all staff to ensure current best practice is used.