

# Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic School Epping

## 2008 Annual Report



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## **1. Message from Key Groups in Our School Community**

### **1.1 Message from the Principal**

We have much pleasure in presenting to the school community the 2008 Annual Report of Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic School. 2008 was a significant year in the history of the school as Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic School celebrated one hundred years of Catholic education and the youth of the world visited our country to celebrate World Youth Day.

Our Lady Help of Christians is a K-6 coeducational parish school where students are valued and difference is respected and celebrated. We are a strong and vibrant Catholic community where the partnership between students, staff, parents and the parish is fostered.

A strong ethos of pastoral care exists in the school and this is evident in the increasing involvement of the different cultures that comprise the school community. The school continues to maintain its commitment to ensuring the respect and dignity of each individual and endeavours to support the parents in this community in their role as primary educators of their children.

The school is blessed with highly professional and dedicated staff who focus on meeting the needs of all the students in their care. 2008 was a very successful year with our school excelling in many areas. Highlights of the year are recorded in this Annual Report.

### **1.2 Message from the Parent Body**

2008 saw another successful year for Our Lady Help of Christians parent community with the highlight being the centenary celebrations of the school attended by the Bishop and numerous dignitaries.

Throughout the year, the parent body continued their great support of the school management team in their strategic goals with financial contributions allowing further development of the IT refresh program and other educational and infrastructure requirements.

The main fundraising vehicle, the Epping Twilight Markets continued to attract good numbers of stallholders and visitors with the highlight being the first birthday celebrations in September.

The ongoing Fathers in the Classroom initiative and class parents' program once again provided invaluable insight and rewards to both students and parents alike and continues to be very well received.

### **1.3 Message from the Student Body**

Students at Our Lady Help of Christians are involved in many areas of school life. Examples of these include:

- Year 6 children act as role models for the Kindergarten children through the Buddy Program
- social justice fund raising initiatives
- leadership at formal assemblies
- coordination of liturgical celebrations
- leadership during activities such as Book Week and fitness mornings
- involvement in all the sporting events at the school.

All students are challenged to be lifelong learners and critical and creative thinkers. Students are valued and difference is respected and celebrated.



## 2. School Profile

### 2.1 Introduction

Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic School is part of the Parish of Epping and Carlingford located in the Broken Bay Diocese, on Sydney's North Shore, in the centre of the shopping area of Epping. The school is a two minute walk from Epping station and located on the parish grounds, behind the church. With a main entrance from Cambridge Street, the school can also be accessed from Oxford Street, which is the main street in Epping.

The school caters for boys and girls from Kindergarten to Year 6. Students are drawn mainly from Epping, North Epping, Carlingford, Cheltenham, Beecroft, Eastwood and Marsfield. The school enjoys a positive profile in the local community and can be proud of its reputation for excellence in teaching and learning and a strong pastoral environment.

The centenary year in 2008 was a time to celebrate the many successes of one hundred years of Catholic education. The theme for this year was 'Our Future Owes Much to the Past' and this recognised the important contribution that many people had made, from the Mercy Sisters to the lay staff, to the education of thousands of children throughout the last one hundred years.

2008 was also a time to welcome pilgrims from across the world for the World Youth Day celebrations. A group of 146 German and Austrian pilgrims made the school their home during World Youth Day. This was a time of great celebration for our visitors and the school and parish communities.

### 2.2 Student Profile

The following information describes the student profile for 2008:

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Indigenous	Total
66	87	25	0	153

\*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	1	14

## 2.5 Teacher Attendance and Retention Rates

The average teacher attendance rate during 2008 was 96.1%. This figure does not include teachers on planned leave.

The teacher retention rate from 2007 to 2008 was 100.0%.

## 2.6 Teacher Satisfaction

Members of staff regularly have the opportunity of participating in professional development programs. These have been taken up by numerous staff members. Quality teaching and learning, numeracy and literacy workshops, boys' education and uses of technology in the classroom initiatives were embraced by the staff in 2008.

## 2.7 Student Attendance

The average student attendance rate for 2008 was 96%.

## 2.8 Student Satisfaction

2008 was an exciting year for the school as the school community celebrated its centenary. This significant event provided the students of the school with an opportunity to acknowledge the work of many teachers both past and present. The students of the school learnt about the important role that the Sisters of Mercy played in establishing the school and the contribution that they have made to the school's one hundred years of Catholic education.

The year was a significant celebration for the community and it made everyone proud to be part of a Catholic school with such a rich history.



### 3. Catholic Life and Mission

#### 3.1 Catholic Heritage

Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic School was founded by the Mercy Sisters. Sisters Bede Murphy and Malachy Boyle were the first teachers and founders of the school in 1908.

For the next seventy years the Mercy sisters committed themselves to service and compassion for all in the school community. They modelled a strong work ethic and were dedicated in their role of providing quality education for their students. The Mercy sisters have created a rich heritage for future generations. Their Mercy values of service, compassion and quality education have endured the test of time and continue to be central to the school's mission.

The Catholic Mercy heritage is what sets us apart from other schools. It is the anchor for the current school culture which aims to educate its students to be faith-filled contributors to the world of the future.

2008 was the year that the youth of the world visited our country to celebrate World Youth Day 08. Our school had the privilege of hosting a group of 146 German and Austrian pilgrims as they celebrated the events of World Youth Day. This provided an opportunity for the school and parish communities to unite and work together. A strong and deep relationship between school and parish was further enhanced.



#### 3.2 Religious Life of the School

The school is committed to educating the students in the Catholic faith. A new Religious Education Coordinator was appointed to lead the school community in the faith formation of staff, students and parents.

The staff worked to assist students to develop their relationship with Jesus. This has occurred in a variety of ways throughout the year:

- The prayer and liturgical life of the school is valued and students are actively taught respect and protocols around worship.
- The Religious Education Coordinator and staff prepared whole school and class masses and other liturgical celebrations during the year, ensuring that all students, teachers and parents had opportunities to be actively involved in the prayer life of the school.
- The whole school gathered each morning before lessons for prayers and a morning greeting.
- All classes set aside time each day for prayer.
- The staff met each Friday for morning prayer and reflection.
- The Year 6 students led the school Thursday assembly in prayer. Up to thirty parents attended our school assemblies each week.





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

As a Catholic primary school in the Diocese of Broken Bay, we work in partnership with parents and parish.

This year all the students from Our Lady Help of Christians joined with the school community from St Gerard's Carlingford in a combined school Mass to celebrate as one Parish of Epping and Carlingford.

- The choir and children from a variety of classes sang for the elderly parishioners several times during the year. This was a source of great delight for both students and parishioners.
- The Religious Education Coordinator attended sacramental information meetings and school parents acted as hosts and group leaders for the parish-based program. Teachers attended the Sacraments of First Reconciliation, Confirmation and First Eucharist.
- School and parish parents assisted with a Children's Mass each month. The morning tea served afterwards continued to be popular with the families.
- All of the Year 6 students attended the Diocesan Cluster Year 6 Mass and staff attended the Diocesan Schools Staff Mass. These were valued opportunities for the students and staff to be connected with the larger system of schools to which we belong.
- Primary classes attended parish masses each term.
- Year 6 served morning tea after the monthly healing Mass.

### 3.4 Catholic Worldview

The Catholic Worldview is the Catholic lens through which we, as Catholics, interact with the world. It is a tangible expression of the call to Catholic discipleship. The Catholic Worldview pervades all aspects of the school's life including its policies, practices and procedures.

Staff participated in weekly prayer each Friday morning. Individual members of staff took responsibility for organising, preparing and leading prayer.

Daily prayer took place each morning in all classrooms. This allowed children time to listen to God's call, reflect upon their lives and to talk to God. A prayer table and sacred space was a feature in every classroom. These were updated to reflect the current liturgical season.

The students in Stage 3 participated in several reflection days coordinated by the Parish Youth Worker and the team of support staff.

Social justice initiatives gave children a sense of proactive engagement with Catholic discipleship. The students were provided with numerous opportunities to engage in outreach activities.

In Term 1, the school supported Project Compassion. Fundraising initiatives were conducted in each classroom. This was supported by learning about the work of Caritas.

In Term 4, money was raised to support the Matthew Talbot Christmas meal project. The generosity displayed by the school community enabled meals to be provided to homeless men on Christmas day.

### 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 staff of the school participated in a spirituality professional learning day facilitated by the Catholic Schools Office Mission Service Education Officer. The focus of the day was the Trinity.



## 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

During 2008 the staff continued to implement the school Pastoral Care Policy. This policy was based on the Diocesan Pastoral Care Policy. The school has also developed policies around behaviour management and anti-bullying.

In the first week of each school term, all classroom teachers revise the school code of conduct and anti-bullying strategies with the students, in the light of pastoral care of others. The Behaviour Management Policy and Anti-bullying Policy are revised and discussed regularly with all staff at staff meeting time. The parent community were informed about the school's approach to bullying in the newsletter throughout the year.

The school's Behaviour Management Policy was implemented on occasions to deal with inappropriate behaviour. The policy is communicated to parents in the newsletter throughout the year.

The consistent implementation of these policies by the school staff resulted in positive behaviours being exhibited by the students throughout the year. Self-discipline and responsibility linked with pastoral care of others was evident throughout 2008 in the leadership displayed by the Stage 3 students and the support given by all members of the school community.



### 4.3 Pastoral Care of Families

Both formal and informal support structures exist for families and students within the schools of the Broken Bay Diocese. The North Shore Diocesan school counsellor was available for consultation, not only for students and parents but also for the school. The counsellor's input was sought and valued on several occasions with regard to the pastoral welfare of several students during 2008.

The school community also supported needy families in different ways when the need arose. This included the continuation of the Welfare Fund to provide financial support when required.

### 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 six Key Learning Areas (KLAs) were taught across all seven grades (Mathematics, English, PDHPE, Science and Technology, HSIE and Creative Arts). The new Diocesan curriculum was followed for Religious Education. These KLAs are formulated by the NSW Board of Studies and schools are required to follow and implement the different curriculum. The units of content are covered in a two year Stage cycle ensuring a balance across content.

Following the Annual Plan for 2007, Our Lady Help of Christians staff continued to focus on the development of the use of thinking skills to challenge students' learning. This was conducted through the use of the NSW Quality Teaching framework which focuses on teaching practices based on:

- promoting high levels of **intellectual quality**
- developing a **quality learning environment**
- making learning for students **significant**.

The Quality Teaching Framework was a focus in Stage 3 in Human Society and its Environment in the unit on Antarctica. A class blog was established and the teachers implemented a unit that was supported by the Web 2 tools. The Stage 3 teachers reported to staff on the planning process and the teaching strategies used to improve student learning.

### 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.
- In the 2008 cohort, there were 21 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
<b>Reading</b>	School	0	5	10	29	29	29	100
	National	6.1	12	17.7	23	21.7	17.7	92.1
<b>Writing</b>	School	0	0	10	14	29	48	100
	National	2.9	6.5	15.6	28.7	27.4	17.2	95.4
<b>Spelling</b>	School	0	0	33	19	24	24	100
	National	5.9	10	19	25.9	21.9	15.5	92.4
<b>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</b>	School	0	0	19	38	5	38	100
	National	6.6	10.7	17.3	23.3	21.3	19.1	91.7
<b>Numeracy</b>	School	0	0	14	48	19	19	100
	National	3.3	10.9	22.9	28	20.9	12.4	95.0





Band distributions at Year 3 demonstrate that for every test area, the school percentage of students in the top two bands exceeds national rates. It is also pleasing to note that there were no students in the lowest band and minimal students in Band 2. This suggests that the school's early intervention programs are successful in meeting specified targets. These programs, provided in the period 2006-08 for students at risk of not demonstrating the expected standard in various areas of literacy, will be offered again in 2009. Numeracy was given a renewed focus in 2008 and as there is still room for growth in the attainment of numeracy skills, mathematics/ numeracy will remain an even stronger focus in 2009. The very strong performance of students in Band 6 in literacy is worthy of particular note.

#### 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
<b>Reading</b>	School	0	5	11	21	16	47	100
	National	7.5	13.6	23.9	26	18.1	9.3	90.9
<b>Writing</b>	School	5	0	15	40	10	30	95
	National	5.9	11.8	25.3	29.3	17.9	8.3	92.5
<b>Spelling</b>	School	5	5	0	35	20	35	95
	National	6.8	12.8	24.9	28.2	18.2	7.6	91.7
<b>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</b>	School	0	5	10	50	15	20	100
	National	6.6	11	21.2	26.4	19.9	13.4	91.9
<b>Numeracy</b>	School	0	0	11	47	32	11	100
	National	5.9	17.4	28.9	25.7	13.9	6.6	92.6

It was very pleasing to note that 80% and above of the Year 5 students were in the top three bands (Bands 6, 7 and 8) in all the test areas. The NAPLAN results in Year 5 indicate that current teaching programs and teaching strategies are working effectively to support student skills and knowledge across all facets of literacy and numeracy.

### 5.3 Extracurricular Activities

At Our Lady Help of Christians, the students are given opportunities to actively participate in a wide variety of extracurricular activities. Some of these include:

- Year 5 Debating (organised by local Rotary Club)
- Maths Olympiad (students from Year 5 and 6)
- Australasian School Competitions (Years 3 to 6, voluntary)
- School choir
- School band
- Young Leaders Day (School Leaders)
- Public Speaking (Years 2 to 6)
- Keyboard and piano lessons available before and after school
- Sports
  - Cross country team
  - Swimming team
  - Athletics team
  - Soccer and netball gala days



- Diocesan selection for sports (netball, softball, cricket, rugby, touch football)
- School netball and soccer teams.

It is worth noting that the Year 5 debating team were winners of the 2008 Rotary Inter-school Debating competition. This was a significant achievement against larger schools within the area. Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Primary School had representatives in cross country, athletics and swimming at Diocesan and Polding levels.

#### 5.4 Professional Learning

The average expenditure on professional learning, per teacher, in 2008 was \$558. All teachers participated in a range of professional learning activities in 2008.

##### ***Whole Staff Professional Learning:***

- NSW Quality Teaching Framework
- Religious Education in the Primary Classroom
- Adult Faith formation
- CPR – update
- The use of technology to support teaching and learning
- Numeracy development
- Literacy development
- Developing knowledge of an asthma-friendly school
- Teaching strategies linked to the Quality Teaching Framework
- OH&S training

##### ***Selected staff members:***

- BST and PWA Analysis
- Child Protection and Risk Management
- OHS Training
- Finance and Budgeting for Schools
- Educational leadership
- Social Justice Teaching Workshop
- Learning Support within the curriculum
- PDHPE KLA
- ICLT in the Primary Classroom
- Pedagogy Initiative in Mathematics and HSIE
- Boys' Education Project
- Literacy leadership development
- Numeracy leadership development

During 2008 a staff member completed a postgraduate course in Educational Studies through the University of Newcastle.



## 6. Strategic Initiatives

### 6.1 2008 Priorities and Achievements

When targeting goals for 2008 the school referred to the new school Strategic Plan 2007-2010 and the School's Mission Statement. The 2008 annual goals were achieved in the following areas:

#### ***Priority Area 1: Catholic Life and Mission***

- Opportunities for faith formation were provided for staff, students and parents through the liturgical celebrations and spirituality workshops. The events of World Youth Day also enhanced and extended relationships across the parish and school communities.

#### ***Priority Area 2: Pastoral Care***

- Develop and further encourage practices that are inclusive of the whole school community.

#### ***Priority Area 3: Curriculum Teaching and Learning***

- Staff attended workshops and staff meetings that provided professional learning opportunities that identified consistent approaches to quality pedagogy K-6
- Staff development days were organised that focused on the use of emerging technologies that enhance quality teaching and learning.

#### ***Priority Area 4: Leadership***

- Catholic School Office Parent Liaison Officer facilitated workshops to ensure that roles and responsibilities were clearly identified for parents and staff.

#### ***Priority Area 5: Professional Learning***

- Staff was actively and collaboratively involved in professional learning workshops that focused on the Quality Teaching Framework.

#### ***Priority Area 6: Stewardship, Management and Accountability***

- The profile of Our Lady Help of Christians in the local community was promoted through the Centenary celebrations.
- The mentoring program in stage one continued to promote positive relationships with surrounding secondary schools.

### 6.2 2009 Priorities and Challenges

A major focus for the teachers and school community in 2009 will be the continuation of teaching and learning based on the Quality Teaching Program. This program will enable teachers to recognise, identify and implement elements of quality teaching that directly impact on and improve student learning and achievement.

Another major priority for 2009 will be the development of knowledge and teaching practices in mathematics. Through the support of a numeracy consultant and a learning coach teachers will examine their current practices, re-visit the diocesan numeracy plan and use school testing and NAPLAN data to inform decisions for improved teaching and learning in numeracy.



## 7. Parent Participation

### 7.1 Introduction

The school can be proud of the high level of involvement from the parents. As a small Catholic school, the students' learning environment is greatly enriched by the purposeful contribution of many fathers and mothers across the school community.

This involvement spans many areas of school life. Parents actively participate in programs involving faith formation, learning, sport, social events and fundraising.

- Many school families volunteered to accommodate pilgrims during the World Youth Day celebrations.
- Many parents attended classroom masses held in the Year 3, 4, 5 and 6 rooms.
- Parents acted as group leaders and host families for the parish sacramental program.
- Whole school masses are well attended by our parent community.
- The "Dads in the Classroom Project" ensure that dads have an opportunity to assist in class based activities with a major focus on literacy.
- Swimming and athletic carnivals are strongly supported by our parent community. Parents also transported children to the next round of competitive events for both swimming and athletics.
- The teachers and students were assisted by parents on various school excursions.
- Parents coordinate the soccer and netball clubs. The teams are coached and managed by parents and assistants. In 2008 the school fielded netball teams and soccer teams. Both girls and boys play in the soccer competition across all ages.
- This year saw the enjoyment of a successful Gala day. It was a fun day for members of all families within the school community.
- The school benefits from an active Parents' and Friends' Association (P&F). The P&F were responsible for raising funds to purchase books for the library and teaching resources. Funds were also raised to purchase new laptops for the school, blinds in classrooms and the library and centenary gifts for the students.
- Parents attended guest speakers nights.
- Parent education sessions were held on assisting children in reading.
- Parents provide support and assist in classrooms, Library, canteen and uniform shop.

The P&F were also responsible for organising many opportunities for parents to enjoy themselves socially. These included: the Welcome Barbecue, Mother's Day Thank You Night, Father's Day Breakfast, School Disco and the Centenary celebrations which included the 'Back to OLHC Day' and the Centenary Dinner.

### 7.2 Parent Satisfaction

The parent community was very supportive of the strategic direction of the school during 2008. The sense of welcome and belonging was promoted through the positive partnership that exists between school and home.

Strong communication links and the opportunity for parent involvement in many areas of school life was appreciated by the parent community.

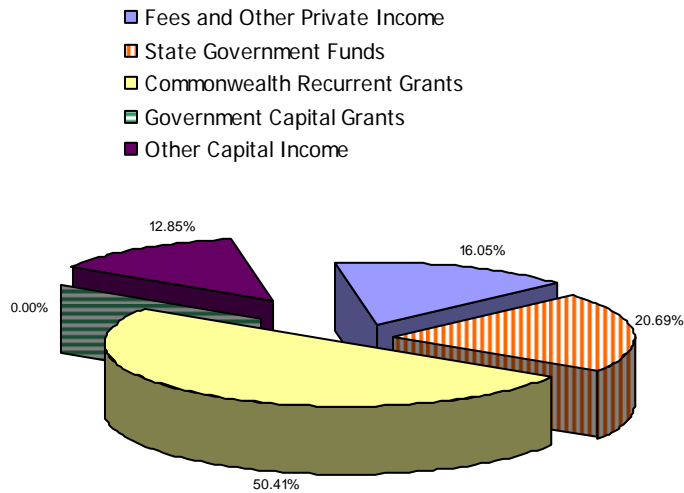


## 8. Financial Report

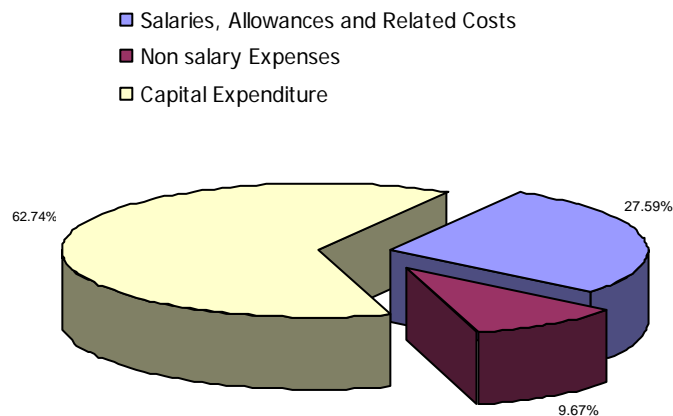
Consistent with Board of Studies requirements, financial income and expenditure for this school is shown in the graphs below.

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.