

# Annual School Report 2017 School Year



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## About this report

Mary Help of Christians Primary School, Sawtell is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by the Lismore Catholic Schools Office (CSO), as the 'approved authority' for the Registration System formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act 1990.

The *Annual Report to the Parish School Community* for this year provides the parish school community with fair, reliable and objective information about school performance measures and policies, as determined by the Minister for Education.

The *Report* also outlines to the parish school community information about initiatives and developments of major interest and importance to the parish school community and the achievements arising from the implementation of the school's Strategic Management Plan and Annual Plan.

The *Report* demonstrates accountability to the Federal and State Government regulatory bodies, the parish and school community and the Catholic Schools Office. This *Report* has been approved by the CSO which monitors school processes to ensure compliance with all NESA requirements for Registration.

This *Report* complements and is supplementary to school newsletters, year books and other regular communications. The *Report* must be available on the school's website by 30 June 2018 following its submission to NESA.

The contents of this *Report* may be tabled for discussion at various parent forums and all information is public.

Further information about the school or this *Report* may be obtained by contacting the school on Ph 02 6653 3122 or by visiting the website at [www.sawplism.catholic.edu.au](http://www.sawplism.catholic.edu.au)



## 1.0 Messages

### 1.1 Principal's Message

The primary purpose of Mary Help of Christians Catholic primary school is to support the members of the parish community in providing a faith formation for their children. The school fosters a commitment to the individual person and provides opportunities for academic, cultural and sporting achievement. Mary Help of Christians offers students a quality Catholic education based on the teaching of the Church and within the context of a strong faith community.

Our parish school continued to provide many opportunities for the students to excel in academic, cultural and sporting areas. All of these areas combined to ensure that our school's mission was lived out daily in the life of the school.

The students' achievements and accomplishments were showcased throughout 2017. Student work was proudly displayed in classrooms, on school notice boards, in the school office and on class webpages and social media. School achievement was highlighted and celebrated at many school assemblies. Our focus was to continue to build on the reputation that Mary Help of Christians has earned as an exemplary school. The following list provides an indication of the school's academic achievements. In 2017 the school:

- participated in a number of independent academic tests and achieved good results.
- achieved expected growth or higher than expected growth in standardised assessments overseen by the Australian Council of Educational Research.
- identified and responded to students requiring academic intervention, resulting in better than expected growth.
- achieved Distinctions and High Distinctions in the Lismore Diocese Religious Education test.
- entered four teams in the regional Tournament of Minds competition receiving Tournament honours.

There were many opportunities throughout the year for our school to be represented at community and cultural events. The following list provides an indication of the school's cultural program and community involvement. In 2017 the school:

- marched in the annual ANZAC march and laid a wreath at the ensuing memorial service.
- was represented by the 30-strong drum band at the annual ANZAC march.
- competed in the local Music Eisteddfod achieving highly commended awards.
- competed in the local Drama Eisteddfod achieving first and second place.
- supported members of the school parliament to organise many events, fundraisers and awareness raising campaigns, e.g. Environment, Social Justice, Education, Social Affairs.
- attended and laid a wreath at the local Police Remembrance Ceremony.
- presented a combined music performance - From the Heart - involving 300 students from the cluster of local Catholic Primary schools

Students performed well at various sporting events throughout the year. The following list provides some examples of sporting highlights. In 2017:

All students participated in school swimming, athletics and cross-country carnivals.

- 28 students represented the school at Diocesan Summer and Winter Sports trials with 2 students going on to represent the diocese at Polding trials and 1 student going on to National Basketball titles.
- In swimming, 24 children represented the school at Zone Swimming, with 18 going through to represent the Clarence Zone, 7 representing the Lismore Diocese and 1 student representing Polding in the All Schools State Swimming carnival. Mary Help of Christians won the shield at the Zone Swimming and Clarence Zone won the Diocesan Swimming Carnival.
- In athletics, 47 students represented the school at Zone level, with 23 going on to represent Clarence Zone at the Diocesan Athletics Carnival.
- In Cross-country, 40 children were selected to represent the school at the Clarence Zone carnival, with 19 going on to Diocesan level and 3 students representing Lismore Diocese at the Polding carnival.
- The school's soccer team competed in the Barney Barselaar Cup with local schools as well as the Clarence Zone tournament (Paul Wilson Cup).

There were many people who assisted in the school's quest for excellence. In particular, special thanks are extended to the parent body and the school staff for all their generous efforts. Mary Help of Christians is indeed blessed to have such dedicated and enthusiastic people supporting the school.

Liz Watts  
Principal

## 1.2 A Parent Message

We have seen yet another fabulous year at MHOC, and the Parish School Forum (PSF) is grateful for the support from the whole parent community without which, the school would not be the vibrant, thriving place we all know it to be. Thank you! The PSF greatly values the contribution made by all members of our wonderful committees – the enthusiasm and commitment shown is certainly a pleasure of which to be a part.

The major events of 2017 included the amazing Spring Fair: the popular 'Sharing the Wisdom' series of parent information nights (on behalf of the Parent Assembly); the family Bush Dance; the Mother's Day tea-towels and Father's Day calendars; and the fun-filled family Waterslide Night. The fundraising efforts throughout the year have assisted the school greatly and we thank everyone who assists with these.

The PSF welcomes any suggestions as we aim to support and enhance the lives of all members of our school community. Looking forward to 2018!

Mrs Jo Melinz  
Chairperson  
Mary Help of Christians Parish School Forum

## 2.0 This Catholic School

### 2.1 The School Community

Mary Help of Christians is located in Sawtell and is part of the Mary Help of Christians Parish which serves the communities of Sawtell, Boambee, Bonville, Crossmaglen and Toormina. School families are drawn from the towns and communities of Sawtell, Boambee, Bonville, Crossmaglen and Toormina.

Last year the school celebrated 38 years of Catholic education.

The parish priest, Fr Michael Alcock, is involved in the life of the school.

Mary Help of Christians is a parish school with strong links to the parish family. The school aims to involve the children and their families in the life of the parish through activities such as:

- supporting the parish-based sacramental program and participation by staff in parish ministries.
- organising and encouraging participation in monthly Children's Masses.
- welcoming parishioners to Masses held at school.
- sharing school news through the monthly Parish magazine and reporting school news regularly to the Parish Board.

The parish school uses the mandated Diocesan Religious Education curriculum and the resource text "To Know, Worship & Love". Catholic life and culture permeate school life with 2.5 hours of religious education taught formally each week. The Diocesan Daily Prayer guidelines support the school's prayer life. The aims and direction of our parish school are guided by *Catholic Education in the Diocese of Lismore, Foundational Values for Catholic Identity and Mission*. This Framework underpins all policy, planning, roles and processes within the parish school. Our aim is to increasingly integrate the essence of this statement into all aspects of school life. Religious Education is given priority in our school and classroom curriculum and planning.



The parish school Mission Statement highlights the nature and calling of the school.

## 2.2 School Enrolment

Mary Help of Christians caters for children from Kindergarten to Year 6. The following table indicates the student enrolment characteristics:

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	TOTAL 2017	TOTAL 2016
<b>Male</b>	35	30	35	26	25	33	34	218	207
<b>Female</b>	43	27	37	22	33	23	21	206	199
<b>Indigenous</b> <i>count included in first two rows</i>	2	3	3	3	4	4	3	22	24
<b>EALD</b> <b>(Language background other than English)</b> <i>count included in first two rows</i>	8	3	3	4	1	3	2	24	18

## 2.3 Student Attendance

In order for students to reach their full potential it is important that they attend school regularly. Whilst it is the parents' legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly, our staff as part of their duty of care monitor attendance each day. The Class Roll is marked every day and rolls are overseen each week by the principal. The school uses the attendance coding system adopted in all NSW schools. Unexplained absences are followed up promptly by staff. Parents are requested to provide a satisfactory explanation for an absence by means such as a written note, telephone call, Skoolbag app or email to the school, preferably on the first day of absence, and certainly within seven days. The principal is made aware of sustained student absences or absences reflecting a pattern. In these situations, the principal or delegated staff member contacts the parent/guardian. Parents are encouraged to arrange medical and other necessary appointments outside school hours. Prolonged periods of absence occur from time-to-time for various reasons. In these cases, students and their parents meet with the principal to discuss the leave request.

The average student attendance rate for the school during 2017 is shown in the following table.

	Kindergarten	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	All Years
<b>Average Student Attendance rates</b>	95%	94%	95%	94%	95%	94%	95%	95%

## 2.4 Teacher Standards and Professional Learning

Teacher Qualifications / Staff Profile		Number of Teachers
1.	Those having formal qualifications from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	27
2.	Those having graduate qualifications but not a formal teaching qualification from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	0
3.	Those not having qualifications described in 1 or 2 above but having relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate relevant knowledge.	0
4.	Teachers with recognised qualifications to teach Religious Education.	24
5.	Number of staff identifying as Indigenous employed at the school.	1
6.	Total number of non-teaching staff employed at the school.	20

## 2.5 Teacher Attendance and Retention

The average teacher attendance figure is 94%. This figure is provided to the school by the CSO. Three teachers were on maternity leave. One teacher accessed extended Personal Leave prior to retirement. Two teachers were on Leave without Pay for all of 2017.

## 2.6 Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

The school ensures that at every available formal and informal opportunity the values of respect and responsibility is promoted. We want every student to understand and appreciate that they are part of both the school and the local community.

The school models and teaches students about respect and responsibility in a number of ongoing ways:

- There is a whole school code of conduct - Be safe, Be respectful, Be your best- which is integrated into all community interactions. This policy was reviewed and 'refreshed' in 2017 by the School Improvement Team.
- The Mary Help of Christians School Parliament models the student leadership qualities of respect and responsibility. During 2017, all Year 6 students were involved in some form of community outreach. The school community contributed generously to social justice appeals organised through Saint Vincent de Paul, Caritas and Junior Josephites.
- The Seasons program was offered on two separate occasions to support those in the school community experiencing grief and loss.
- The Better Buddies and Peer Support programs ran concurrently to support all students in the school with a particular focus on transition students.
- A strong relationship with Sawtell Catholic Care of the Aged was maintained with reciprocal visits taking place for a variety of purposes throughout 2017.

## 2.7 Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

The school uses a variety of methods to gauge parental, student and teacher satisfaction with school operations. The school understands the importance of regularly reviewing approval and satisfaction levels. Last year the following formal and informal opportunities allowed the school to test reaction to decisions, policy and school procedures:

- The school participated in the Diocese of Lismore School Improvement Survey, gathering data from the staff, parents and students. The staff developed the 2018-19 Annual School Plan, in light of the feedback provided.
- The Principal conducted informal parent discussions around satisfaction and areas for improvement. This information was provided for staff and was reported to the Parish School Forum and school staff each term.



- The Assistant Principal and Leader of Pedagogy conducted interviews with student focus groups who gave feedback on how they learn best. This anonymous information was fed back to class teachers to help guide practice.
- The Parish School Forum meets regularly with frequent discussion and discernment around school policy and procedures.

### **3.0 Teaching and Learning**

#### **3.1 School Curriculum**

The school provides a comprehensive educational program based on and taught in accordance with the National Education Standards Authority syllabuses for Primary Education. The Key Learning Areas (KLAs) are English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Human Society and its Environment, Creative Arts and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education.

The learning spaces in the school are flexible to allow teachers to personalise learning for all our students. The flexibility of these spaces allows teachers to group students according to individual learning needs. Children are encouraged to set learning goals and identify areas for growth.

Teachers meet weekly in Professional Learning Teams to plan the implementation of a rich curriculum that is inspiring and rigorous, based on assessment as, of and for learning. Twice a year, teachers meet at 'Impact Meetings' to scrutinise the learning pathway of each child.

A skilled Intervention Team provide support for targeted learners in Maths and English. Reading Recovery, EMU (Extending Mathematical Understanding) specialist groups and Levelled Literacy Intervention are the programs employed by the school.

Pedagogy is designed to engage students and incorporates the use of technology. The school provides a range of devices to all classrooms and the ICT Policy and User Agreement allows for students from Year 2 to Year 6 to bring their own device for classroom use. There is a focus on teaching digital citizenship while embedding this technology into learning experiences. A particular focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) encourages critical and creative thinking and problem solving to provide students with exciting, contemporary challenges.

#### **3.2 Student Performance in National Testing Programs**

The school participated in the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) with students in Years 3 and 5 tested. In Year 3, 48 students presented for the tests while in Year 5 there were 55 students.

In Literacy there were four elements tested. These were reading, writing, spelling and grammar and punctuation. In Numeracy, students were tested in number, patterns and algebra, measurement, data and space and geometry.

In both Year 3 and Year 5 there are six achievement bands with Band 6 being the highest level of attainment in Year 3 and Band 8 the highest in Year 5.

The Commonwealth Government has set minimum acceptable standards for reading, writing and numeracy at particular ages.

In Year 3, students who achieve Band 3 or higher have achieved above the minimum standard. In Year 5 those students who achieve at Band 5 and higher have achieved above the minimum standard set by government.

At Mary Help of Christians, school and student performance is closely monitored. These tests are one means of gathering data on individual student and school achievement. School staff have participated in Catholic Schools Office information sessions on NAPLAN and SMART 2 Data Analysis workshops.

The following data indicates the percentage of Mary Help of Christians students in each band compared to the State percentage.

### Year 3 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy

Percentage of students in Bands 1 to 6

BAND	6		5		4		3		2		1	
	State	School										
Reading	29.2	35.4	21.8	29.2	22.7	16.7	15.7	8.3	6.5	6.2	4.0	4.2
Writing	14.5	0.0	38.7	43.8	23.1	22.9	17.7	27.1	4.3	4.2	1.6	2.1
Spelling	28.3	12.5	24.4	29.2	21.1	25.0	14.1	16.7	9.1	1.6	3.1	2.1
Grammar and Punctuation	35.8	43.8	26.5	22.9	14.4	10.4	10.7	12.5	6.9	2.1	6.0	8.3
Numeracy	23.0	18.8	20.3	31.2	27.3	31.2	17.0	14.6	9.6	4.2	2.9	0.0

### Year 5 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy

Percentage of students in Bands 3 to 8

BAND	8		7		6		5		4		3	
	State	School										
Reading	18.4	18.2	21.3	16.4	26.1	32.7	17.0	16.4	12.7	9.1	4.5	7.3
Writing	5.3	0.0	12.8	3.6	30.0	30.9	36.0	47.3	9.3	10.9	6.5	7.3
Spelling	17.4	5.5	20.8	10.9	29.5	20.0	19.3	49.1	8.1	10.9	5.0	3.6
Grammar and Punctuation	21.8	3.6	14.4	21.8	25.7	27.3	16.0	20.0	15.6	18.2	6.4	9.1
Numeracy	13.4	9.1	19.1	16.4	29.3	40.0	23.6	25.5	11.6	9.1	3.0	0.0

At Mary Help of Christians School, we analyse NAPLAN data, as well as other standardised assessment data, to measure both individual student growth and cohort growth in English and Mathematics. The cohort growth for Year 5 students in Numeracy, Writing and Spelling was well above the 0.8 effect size expected for two year's growth. This is a direct result of our teachers engaging in strategic, ongoing professional learning.

In response to excellent growth in Year 5 Writing, the school will continue to access professional learning from Andrell Education. This supports teachers to embed quality assessment and teaching and learning strategies in Writing and Grammar and Punctuation, continuing to use VCOP (Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers, Punctuation) and Big Write in 2018. Teachers will be closely monitoring student progress and identifying student needs in weekly Professional Learning Team meetings.

To foster continued growth in Numeracy, the school will provide ongoing professional learning for teachers in Mathematics including embedding Extending Mathematical Understanding (EMU)



strategies and the restructuring of the Mathematics Block to incorporate rich tasks for deeper learning and enhanced mathematical thinking in our students.

Levelled Literacy Intervention (LLI) will be used in daily intervention programs in 2018 to support students who have demonstrated less than expected growth and scored in the lower bands in Reading.

### 3.3 Teacher Professional Learning

All teachers have been involved in professional learning activities during the year. These activities are designed to develop the professional skills and understandings of staff so as to improve student outcomes. Professional development can take many forms including whole-staff development days, subject specific in-services, meetings and conferences.

Whole staff development day professional learning activities in 2017 were:

Staff Professional Learning Activity	Date	Presenter
Staff Spirituality Day	50	School Leadership Team
Spelling	30	School Learning Team
Catholic Worldview	30	School Mission Team
School Behaviour Policy	50	School Improvement Team

Additionally, staff attended either singly or in groups a range of professional development opportunities including:

Activity	Staff numbers	Presenter
Extending Mathematical Understanding	4	Catholic Schools Office
Jo Boaler: Mathematical Mindsets	7	Jo Boaler
Rich Mathematical tasks	4	Catholic Schools Office
THRASS training	3	THRASS Australia

The professional learning expenditure has been calculated at \$7821 per staff member. This figure has been calculated by the CSO and reflects expenditure on casual release days and professional development activities in particular categories.

## 4.0 School Policies

### 4.1 Policy Review

School policies are reviewed regularly. The table below lists the school policies and notes any additions, changes or upgrades made during 2017.

Policy name	Status in 2017 (No change, new policy, changes made)	Access this policy at:
Administering Medications Standard Operating Procedures	Changes made	School office
Anti Bully Policy	Under review	School office
Behaviour Management Policy	Changes made	MHOC website
Evacuation & Lockdown Procedures	Changes made	Every classroom and office
Excursion Policy	Changes made	School office
WHS Policy	Changes made	School office
Electrical Safety Policy	Under review	School office
School Maintenance Policy	Changes made	School office
Critical Incident Policy	Changes made	School office
Bushfire Safety Policy	New policy	School office
ICT Policy	Changes made	MHOC website

### 4.2 Enrolment Policy

Every new enrolment at Mary Help of Christians requires parents to attend an enrolment interview. The interview provides an opportunity to learn more about the educational experience provided by the school, specific school procedural policies and current school expectations.

Preference for enrolment is given to children of baptised Catholics. It is a condition of enrolment that all children will participate in class Religious Education lessons and activities, as well as prayer celebrations and school and class Masses.

Children who turn five by 30 June are eligible to apply for enrolment in Kindergarten. Enrolments for Kindergarten children are called for in the year before commencement. Other enrolments are accepted throughout the year if there are vacancies in the classes concerned.

A copy of the enrolment policy is located in the school office or it can be accessed on the school's website. The School Enrolment Policy explains the Parish enrolment guidelines.

### 4.3 Pastoral Care Policy

The school's Pastoral Care Policy is based on the principles of Restorative Justice and fairness. The policy reflects the vision and mission of the Catholic Church and is characterised by safety, trust and mutual respect. To live out this policy the school has adopted various programs aimed at helping students value themselves and experience well-being. These include programs focussing on self-esteem, social relationships, moral development, vocational awareness, sexuality, anti-bullying, drug awareness, health and personal safety. The school's pastoral care program has been developed in consultation with staff, parents and students.

### 4.4 Discipline Policy

The principles of restorative justice are embedded in the school's Behaviour Management Policy. These principles include acknowledging the inevitability of conflict and hurt in relationships, working towards healing by repairing relationships, learning and growing from experience. The policy is regularly communicated to all members of the school community. Students, staff and parents have a clear understanding of the expectations articulated through this policy and are supportive of the need to provide a safe and caring learning environment. The policy acknowledges teacher and student rights and responsibilities and is based on the Gospel teachings of love for God, self and others. The school does not sanction corporal punishment or allow parents to administer corporal punishment in the school.

#### 4.5 Complaints and Grievance 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. The policy is available from the front office or from the school website.

#### 5.0 School Determined Improvement Targets

Each year the school develops an Annual Plan drawn from the five-year Strategic Plan. 2017 was a very rewarding year.

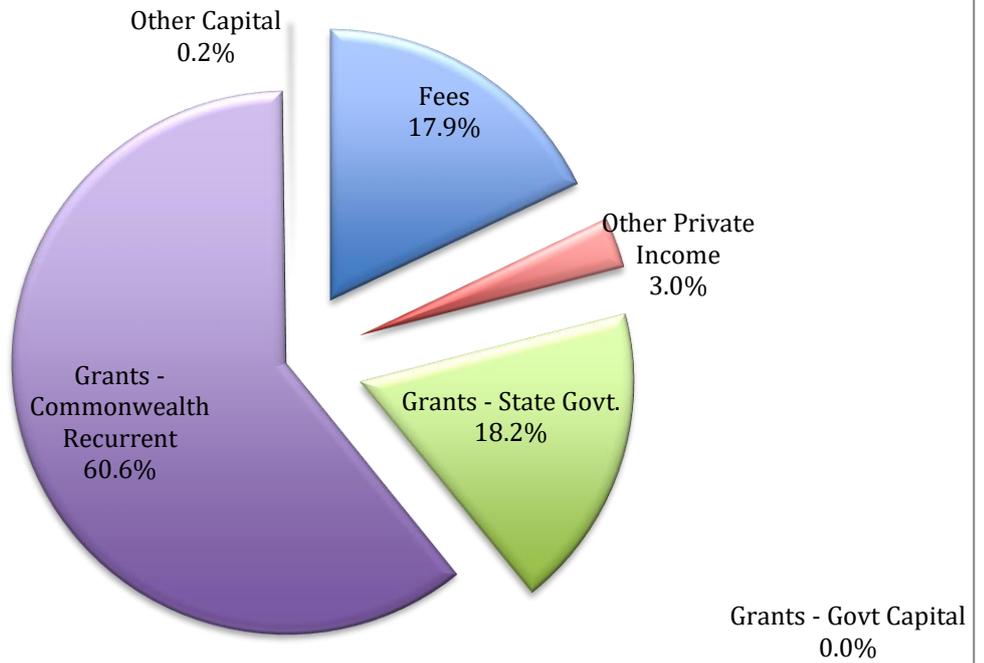
Key improvements achieved this year	Key Improvements for next year
<b>Catholic Identity and Mission</b> Creation of a sacred space on the school grounds.	<b>Catholic Identity and Mission</b> Continue to deepen and strengthen staff spirituality.
<b>Organisation and Co Leadership</b> Development of Behaviour Management Policy and Procedures, incorporating a new Code of Conduct.	<b>Organisation and Co Leadership</b> Engage staff in Action Research to improve student outcomes.
<b>Teaching and Learning</b> Improved results in Writing and Numeracy.	<b>Teaching and Learning</b> Raise the standard of student writing across the school.
<b>Community and Relationships</b> Strengthening of the Class Parent program and further development of the partnership with the Parent Assembly.	<b>Community and Relationships</b> Increase parent engagement in teaching and learning.

#### 6.0 Financial Information

Catholic schools are accountable for all monies received. Each year, the Lismore Catholic Schools Office submits to the Commonwealth Government a financial statement on behalf of the parish primary schools and secondary colleges. This statement details the income and expenditure of each school. In addition, the financial accounts for each school and for the Catholic Schools Office are audited annually.

A visual summary of the income and expenditure reported to the Commonwealth Government for 2017 is presented below:

## 2017 INCOME - Mary Help of Christians Primary School SAWTELL



## 2017 EXPENSE - Mary Help of Christians Primary School SAWTELL

