About this report

Mary Help of Christians school is registered by the Board of Studies (NSW) 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 NSW Board of Studies requirements for Registration.

This Report complements and is supplementary to school newsletters, year books and other regular communications. The Report will be available on the school’s website by 30 June 2014 following its submission to the Board of Studies.

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 02 66533122 or by visiting the website at www.sawplism.catholic.edu.au
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 school offers students a 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 faith and spiritual growth of the students as well as opportunities 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 2013. Student work was proudly displayed in classrooms, on school noticeboards, in the school office, on class twitter pages and on class webpages. School achievement was highlighted and celebrated at many school and classroom showcases. Our focus has been to continue to build on the reputation that Mary Help of Christians school has earned as an exemplary school.

The following list provides an indication of the school’s academic achievements:

- Students participated in a number of independent academic tests and achieved outstanding results.
- Students achieved well in 2013 NAPLAN assessments.
- A number of children achieved Distinctions and Credits in the Newcastle Permanent Maths Competition.

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:

- Mary Help of Christians staff and students were well-represented at the ANZAC March and memorial service.
- Mary Help of Christians drum band supported the ANZAC Day March.
- Our school choir participated in the local eisteddfod.
- Our school choir and various class choirs entertained the elderly in local nursing homes.
- School leaders and staff attended and laid a wreath at the local Police Remembrance Ceremony.
- Mary Help of Christians recognised and celebrated NAIDOC Week.
- Students and staff visited and performed at local pre-schools.
Students performed well at various sporting events during the year. The following list provides some examples of sporting highlights:

- Over 25 children represented the school at Diocesan Summer and Winter Sports trials.
- Over 30 children represented the school at Zone Swimming and Athletics Carnivals.
- Eight children were selected to represent the Zone at the Diocesan Cross-Country carnival.
- Our 8 school Basketball teams performed successfully in the local Basketball competition.

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 school is indeed blessed to have such dedicated and enthusiastic people supporting the school.

Tony Watts  Mary Walsh
Principal    Acting Principal
A Parent Message

The Parish School Forum (PSF) met twice a term in 2013 to discuss ideas and requests that were submitted from our committees, as well as any other issues that arose.

The outcomes were then reported back to the relevant committee.

As at the end of 2013 we have eight committees which come under the banner of the PSF. These committees are Basketball, Bingo, Canteen, Class Parents, Fundraising and Social, Library, Parent Assembly, and Uniform.

The Committees are a fantastic way for parents to meet other parents within our school, have some fun while also benefiting the school.

The Bingo Committee continues to be a major fundraiser for our school.

The Fundraising and Social Committee continued to support the school through two Big Banana Family Fun Nights, as well as organizing activities for Father’s Day, Mother’s Day and supporting school families in need.

The Spring Fair Committee delivered a very successful community event which showcased the school and provided the school with more resources.

The Parent Assembly supported information evenings on the subject of building resilience in our children, and creating positive partnerships with the school. The PSF is grateful for all the contributions made by staff, parents and students who made 2013 such a great year for our school.

Michelle Skrtic
Chairperson
Parish School Forum

This Catholic School

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

Last year the school celebrated 34 years of Catholic education.

The Parish Priest, Father John Casey, is involved in the life of the school.

Mary Help of Christians School 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 such activities such as:

- supporting the parish Sacramental program;
- welcoming parishioners to Masses held at the school;
welcoming parishioners to a Seniors’ Morning Tea;
- involving staff in parish ministries and committees;
- timing class/family social events to follow Sunday Mass or precede the Saturday vigil;
- sharing school news through the Parish magazine each month.

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 Mary Help of Christians School are guided by Catholic Education in the Diocese of Lismore, the Foundational Beliefs and Practices – The Essential Framework. This Framework underpins all policy, planning, roles and processes within our school. Our aim is to increasingly integrate the essence of this statement into all aspects of parish school life. Religious Education is always given priority in our school and classroom curriculum and planning.

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>K</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>TOTAL 2013</th>
<th>TOTAL 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Male</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Female</strong></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBOTE (Language background other than English)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indigenous count included in first two rows
LBOTE count included in first two rows
School Curriculum

The school provides a comprehensive educational program based on and taught in accordance with the Board of Studies 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.

Mary Help of Christians is a Professional Learning Community. We encourage a focus on successful learning habits, and staff and students use and refer to the Habits of Mind in all aspects of learning. Our teachers meet in Professional Learning Teams once a week and spend time analysing data in order to plan effective learning experiences for all children.

Our flexible learning spaces allow for personalised learning, flexible groupings and individual student goal setting. Our data-based Whole School Literacy and Numeracy plans guide our planning whilst the use of data gained from whole school standardised testing enables us to provide effective intervention programs. The introduction of the WIN (What I Need) Program provides ‘just-in-time’ targeted intervention and has been a powerful driver for teacher reflection and examination of practice.

The use of the K-10 Literacy and Numeracy continuums allow our teachers to identify children’s level of achievement and clearly direct future learning goals.

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, 59 students presented for the tests while in Year 5 there were 49 students.

In Literacy there were four elements tested. These were Reading, Writing, Spelling, 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.

The following data indicates the percentage of Mary Help of Christians School students in each band compared to the state percentage.
At Mary Help of Christians School, school and student performance is closely monitored. These tests are one means of gathering data on individual student and school achievement. School staff has 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 School students in each band compared to the State percentage.

Year 3 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 3 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy</th>
<th>Percentage of students in Bands 1 to 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BAND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</td>
<td>30.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number, Patterns and Algebra</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement, Data, Space and Geometry</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Year 5 NAPLAN results in Literacy and Numeracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage of students in Bands 3 to 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BAND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>School</td>
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<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Reading  | 15.3 | 14.9 | 22.1 | 29.8 | 28.9 | 25.5 | 22.6 | 21.3 | 9.4 | 8.5 | 1.8 | 0.0 |
| Writing  | 7.8  | 2.1  | 15.2 | 10.4 | 29.7 | 25.0 | 32.3 | 50.0 | 8.8 | 6.3 | 6.3 | 6.3 |
| Spelling | 13.2 | 2.1  | 24.7 | 20.8 | 27.3 | 29.2 | 21.1 | 31.3 | 8.1 | 12.5 | 5.5 | 4.2 |
| Grammar and Punctuation | 19.0 | 14.6 | 23.1 | 25.0 | 22.3 | 20.8 | 21.8 | 33.3 | 9.3 | 6.3 | 4.6 | 0.0 |
| Number, Patterns and Algebra | 15.8 | 10.9 | 12.9 | 13.0 | 24.8 | 30.4 | 24.7 | 34.8 | 17.0 | 6.5 | 4.7 | 4.3 |
| Measurement, Data, Space and Geometry | 13.8 | 15.2 | 19.3 | 26.1 | 25.7 | 34.8 | 24.0 | 15.2 | 10.6 | 4.3 | 6.7 | 4.3 |
| Numeracy | 14.8 | 8.7  | 13.0 | 13.0 | 26.4 | 45.7 | 25.7 | 19.6 | 15.1 | 10.9 | 5.1 | 2.2 |

The tables above show that students at Mary Help of Christians School have performed well in 2013. There have been excellent results in Year 5 Reading and in Year 3 Spelling. Both of these are due to intervention programs set in place during an uninterrupted Literacy Block. While the percentages of students in the top Band have not been as high as the State percentages, a number of initiatives especially personalised learning have been implemented, which will impact on student learning. Although there are above State percentages in Numeracy in the middle bands, further analysis of the NAPLAN results will continue to inform and guide the teaching of numeracy especially in relation to the interpretation of the Number, Patterns and Algebra Strand for both Year 3 and Year 5; the introduction of an uninterrupted Mathematics block at the beginning of the school day will also assist in moving students into the upper bands.

The number of students achieving minimum standards and beyond is the direct result of curriculum differentiation with effective teaching strategies and support programs being introduced to meet the needs of learners.
## Teacher Standards and Professional Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Qualifications / Staff Profile</th>
<th>Number of Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Those having formal qualifications from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Those having graduate qualifications but not a formal teaching qualification from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Those not having qualifications described in 1 or 2 above but having relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate relevant knowledge.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teachers with recognised qualifications to teach Religious Education.</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Number of staff identifying as indigenous employed at the school.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Total number of non-teaching staff employed in the school.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All teachers have been involved in professional development activities during the year. These activities are designed to develop the 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 2013 were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Development Days</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proclaim</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>CSO provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to and Implementation of Science and Technology curriculum</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Leadership Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Implementation of Program Builder tool</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Leadership Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Implementation of new English syllabus</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Leadership Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Spiritual Retreat</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Leadership Team</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additionally staff attended either singly or in groups a range of professional development opportunities:

- Teachers participated in a six week online Habits of Mind course.
- A number of teachers and technology staff attended the Google Apps For Education (GAFE) Summit in Brisbane.
- Three teachers participated in the Peer to Peer Training program.
- Teachers participated in professional development on Instructional Coaching.
- from Jim Knight provided through the Empowering Local Schools Network.
- Teachers received professional development in Professional Learning Communities from Kylie Lipscombe provided through the Empowering Local Schools Network.
- Staff attended a school placement in Sydney at a high performing school.

The professional learning expenditure has been calculated at $6 905 per staff member. This figure has been calculated by CSO and reflects expenditure on casual release days and professional development activities in particular categories.

**Teacher Attendance and Retention**

The average teacher attendance figure is 95.66%. This figure is provided to the school by the CSO.

During 2013, there was a change of Principal halfway through the year resulting in changes in classroom teachers and leadership structures in the school.

**Student Attendance**

School attendance is always high. The Class Roll is marked every day and rolls are checked by the Assistant Principal twice each term. Unexplained absences are followed up promptly by classroom teachers. Parents are requested to provide a note to the teacher immediately the child returns to school. 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 their leave request.
The average student attendance rate for the school during 2013 was 93.9%. School attendance rates disaggregated by Year group are shown in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance rates by Year group</th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>93.9%</td>
<td>92.4%</td>
<td>95.0%</td>
<td>94.6%</td>
<td>93.8%</td>
<td>94.1%</td>
<td>94.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**School Policies**

School policies are reviewed regularly. In 2013 the following policies were reviewed, updated or newly created:

- Information and Communications Technologies Policy and User Agreement

**Enrolment Policy**

Every new enrolment at Mary Help of Christians School 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, practising 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 grades 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.
Student Welfare Policy, Pastoral Care Policy

The school’s Pastoral Care Policy is based on the principles of Restorative Justice and procedural 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.

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 self and others.

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.

School Determined Improvement Targets

Each year the school develops an Annual Plan drawn from the five-year Strategic Plan. 2013 was a very rewarding year. Listed below are a number of goals and priorities that the school focused on during the year. The parish school's main goals and priorities were to:

- build on collaborative teaching partnerships
- consolidate the school as a Professional Learning Community
- increase teacher capacity
- continue to build on parent partnerships
- foster the use of data to inform practice
- develop a culture of self-review and reflection.
Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

The school ensures that at every available formal and informal opportunity the values of respect and responsibility are promoted. The school models and teaches students about respect and responsibility through:

- continuing Seasons for Growth program;
- revisiting whole school Code of Conduct: Effort, Safety, Self-responsibility and Respect;
- maintaining School Parliament which promotes student leadership qualities of Respect and Responsibility;
- continuing Good Deeds awards;
- continuing ‘God Moments’ awards;
- continuing Uniform awards;
- continuing the Peer Support program;
- implementing Buddy program to support newly enrolled students;
- supporting social justice issues including student contributions to St Vincent de Paul, sponsorship of disadvantaged students in Malawi and financial support for local charities and causes;
- establishing a Junior Josephites group whose motto is ‘Never see a need without doing something about it’;
- visiting a local nursing home to entertain and converse with elderly residents.

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 Principal conducted informal parent discussions on the subject of satisfaction and areas for improvement. This information was fed back to staff.
- The Principal provided a report to the Parish School Forum once a term and sought feedback on school performance.
- A survey was issued seeking parent and teacher input on areas of need around wellbeing at the school. The feedback provided indicated that the school wellbeing procedures and policies are comprehensive.
- The Assistant Principal 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 student leadership team met with the Assistant Principal every fortnight and gave clear and relevant feedback on playground and classroom positives and concerns.
The School Parliament regularly seeks feedback from classes. Motions that are passed are directed to the Senate (teachers) and the Governor General (Principal).

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 2013 is presented below:

![2013 Income Pie Chart](image1)

![2013 Expense Pie Chart](image2)