



St James' Primary School,  
MUSWELLBROOK

P O Box 606, MUSWELLBROOK 2333

Principal: Mrs Niamh Marzol

Phone: 6543 3094 Fax: 6543 2297

Email: [admin@muswellbrook.catholic.edu.au](mailto:admin@muswellbrook.catholic.edu.au)

[www.muswellbrook.catholic.edu.au](http://www.muswellbrook.catholic.edu.au)

## About the Annual School Report

St James' Primary School is registered by the Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards NSW (BOSTES) as a member of the Catholic system in the Diocese of Maitland - Newcastle.

The Annual School Report provides parents and the wider community with fair, accurate and objective information about various aspects of school performance and development. The Report describes achievement of school development in 2015 and gives information about 2016 priorities.

This Report is a legislative requirement under the Schools Assistance Act, 2008.

The information in this Report is complemented by the Catholic Schools Office website and school websites where other publications and newsletters can be viewed or obtained.

## Messages from Key School Bodies

---

### Principal's Message

What a terrific year we have had! The whole school community has grown in strength and character through the many wonderful initiatives investigated this year. At St James' we began the year with the Catholic School's Week slogan "I belong, You Belong We Belong". We adopted this as our own and used it many times throughout the year to illustrate what it means to be a member of the St James' community. Through the PB4L pillars of Be a Learner, Be Respectful and Be Safe we have successfully bettered our results, lowered the number of accidents and had fewer incidents of unacceptable behaviour. The student survey administered by the SRC showed an outstanding level of agreement with the statements that St James' is a safe school and a place where students and teachers learn in a fun way. It is always a pleasure to come to school and work with such a dedicated and committed staff and with a terrific group of eager students and their supportive parents.

One of my proudest moments was receiving news from ACARA, the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority that St James' had been recognised for their outstanding improvement in NAPLAN results. We have had a major focus on Literacy and Numeracy over the last four years and with the financial support of the State Action Plan initiative we were able to employ a Lead Teacher to assist teachers to learn new and improved ways to teach in today's contemporary landscape. The changes were welcomed by staff and the extra work involved in retraining and professional development was made all the more worthwhile when we were graced by a visit from the NSW Minister for Education, Mr Adrian Piccoli in Term 3. Mr Piccoli congratulated St James' school community on the tremendous improvements made and asked many questions about our practices to ascertain how we were able to improve results with the barriers to learning that exist. His visit was a well-received accolade and rubber stamp on the practices we have in place at St James' to improve results for all students. High expectations and high levels of engagement in significant learning is our mission.

Our students have been involved in high level competition, many making it to Diocesan and State level for sport, two students made it to Diocesan level for public speaking, with many others performing at Regional and Eisteddfod level with great success. Whilst individual endeavour is important we aspire to learn collaboratively and share our knowledge and understanding for the betterment of all. Next year we will be setting up a computer hub in the old computer lab as a space specifically designed for high level collaboration, group work and answering 'Big Questions'. A small Gifted Education group had a trail run with this style of learning in Term 4 and their aptitude and appetite for this type of learning was evident.

St James' is a wonderful school community and I am very pleased to be part of the team that delivers quality education to all.

Niamh Marzol

### Parent Body

The Parents and Friend's Association of St James' has had another busy but productive year. We have been fortunate to receive support from so many parents and community members that we were able to make a substantial donation back to the school for the benefit of our children.

The P&F have held numerous events this year including :

A cake stall was held with the money raised going to assist a school in Cambodia.

A pizza and drink stall at the school disco, Mother's Day and Father's Day Stalls - always a favourite with the children.

Our Winter Ball was a popular event with over one hundred people attending. The hall was decorated beautifully and everyone enjoyed the atmosphere, music and company on the night .

A new addition to our fundraising schedule this year included a raffle with the first prize being a week's trip to Hamilton Island.

Our Spring Fair was held in conjunction with The Upper Hunter Brick Show. All of the classes provided prizes and organised stalls. It was a great community event.

The P&F catered for families visiting on Grandparent's Day and on the night of the Bush Dance.

Donations made to the school assisted with the cost of new reading resources for all stages, small white boards for each student, mulch and garden beds, a contribution towards the cost of the Bush Dance/songwriting workshops and newly purchased IT resources for the soon to be newly furnished IT lab.

The P&F are looking forward to 2017 and all of the activities that the school community has organised.

Andrea Mulholland

P&F President

## Student Body

*Meg Haylen- School Captain*

I have been a St James' student since Kindergarten. St James' has given me so many amazing opportunities while being here. Some of my favourite memories were going to the great Aussie Bush Camp, being named School Captain and all the fun school productions and dances.

*Alex Daniels - School Captain*

I have been at St James' since Kinder. My favourite memory was climbing the 13 foot wall at great Aussie Bush Camp. I really like the friends I have made here and the sports.

*Sherri Brown - Vice Captain*

I've been at St James' since Kindergarten and it has been an awesome experience. The teachers and students are wonderful. My favourite memory from St James' is the Canberra and great Aussie Bush Camp excursions.

*Anna Lloyd - Vice Captain*

I've been at St James' for seven years. The best thing about st James' was the teachers and my friends. I liked having Miss Mortimer as a teacher, she was the best.

*Year 6 comments taken from the Year book:*

I absolutely love the amazing staff who have worked so hard.

I have some amazing memories of St James'.

I would like to thank all of the students and the teachers for making my last year at St James' such a success.

my favourite thing was making so many friendships that I will never forget.

I have really loved my time at St James'.

I've experienced everything the school has to offer. My favourite experiences were the excursions. I will miss the school and would like to thank all of the teachers and my friends.

I have loved going to all of the sporting events and doing the carnivals. Thank you St James' I will miss everyone.

I liked everything...

I have had many great times at St James'. My favourite was the great Aussie Bush Camp.

I have loved my time at St James'. I have made so many good friends, gone on so many great excursions, had AWESOME teachers and have had great author visits to the school.

I have been here for just over a year. I have many fun memories to take with me.

If I had one word to describe St James' it would be 'Adventures'.

I don't have one favourite memory because this journey was the best.

I have been so lucky to have been a St James' student.

The school SRC students facilitated a survey asking students what they loved and what they wanted to change about St James'. Overwhelmingly, the results were positive and reflected that St James' is a safe and respectful environment where the teachers care and make teaching fun. On top of that there was little the students wished to change apart from longer mirrors in the toilets and more access to sport equipment during lunch time. Students felt that bullying was not an issue and many cited the 'Hi 5' as good way to work with minor issues.

# SCHOOL FEATURES

---

## History of the school

St James' School is a Catholic Parish school within the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese. The school is situated on the western fringes of the town, on land first settled by the Wanaruah people.

The school began its existence as a Catholic denominational school in the middle of a developing township in 1862. When government funding was withdrawn in 1883, the Sisters of Mercy took over responsibility for the school. This school continued to provide a valuable Catholic education to the people of the area, until demand for places, brought on by an expansion in mining and power industries, resulted in the need for the construction of a larger school. In 1983, 100 years after the arrival of the Sisters of Mercy, the present Primary School of 14 classrooms, library, chapel and other amenities was opened. The Sisters of Mercy continued their mission in St. James' School until 1972. The Sisters of St. Joseph continued the important task of providing a Catholic education from 1973 until 1991 when the first lay principal was appointed.

St James' School is proud of its dual heritage and encourages students and their families to incorporate the values and ideals of the charisms into daily life.

## Location/Drawing Area

Muswellbrook is a town in the Upper Hunter Region of New South Wales, Australia, about 243 km north of Sydney and 127 km north-west of Newcastle. Muswellbrook had an estimated urban population of 12,723 as at June 2014.

Muswellbrook is located 48 kilometres via the new England Highway from Singleton to the South and 25 km from Scone to the North. The town is predominately reliant on mining for its employment and in the recent mining downturn has seen a major shift in housing availability and pricing.

St James' Primary School is situated on a large acreage on Skellatar Stock Route. The parish church is a 5 minute bus ride away as it is situated in the centre of the town.

- Postal code: 2333
- Elevation: 220 m
- Founded: 1833

## Catholic Identity and Mission

---

### Catholic Imagination and Spirituality

Religious symbols, both traditional and contemporary, are visible throughout the school environment and each classroom has a prayer focus space. The foyer and staffroom have interactive sacred spaces that reflect the liturgical season. Prayer is a valued part of each day and the children experience formal as well as informal prayer opportunities. Students present a prayer or hymn before each weekly assembly.

The school chapel is used for class Mass and weekly staff prayer. It is a sacred space that is also open for parents and students to use. We celebrate all major feast days and special occasions with Mass, liturgy or prayer in the chapel, courtyard or St James' hall.

The school Mission and Vision Statements reflect our role as a community of witnesses to the Catholic faith. We believe that St James' School community excels in education through living and learning in Christ. We are inspired by the Gospel to be successful learners and informed, engaged global citizens.

### Family, Parish and Diocesan evangelising and catechesis

The Staff of St. James' School has worked closely with the Parish and the wider community during 2016. Prayer and liturgical celebrations are integral to the daily life of the school and also provide a link with the local parish church. In the first weeks of the school year many staff members travelled to the Cathedral in Newcastle to celebrate the Called to Serve Mass with diocesan staff and clergy.

Staff and students attended a Mass/Liturgy with Fr Anthony each Semester. Children were invited to participate in Children's Liturgy at Sunday Mass and other parish functions.

We supported collections for the St Vincent de Paul's Christmas and Winter appeals as well as Caritas and Children's Mission donating over two thousand dollars.

Parents were involved in the preparation of their children for the Sacraments of Initiation. The celebration of the Sacraments was an opportunity for the whole school to support the group by attending the celebrations where possible.

During 2016 staff and school families participated in a variety of religious celebrations both at the Church and at school.

### Christian Discipleship

In 2016 St James' introduced prayer journals for staff prayer. The REC and executive staff led prayer in its many forms across Semester two. These 30 minute sessions required staff to journal their reflections and discuss their actions based on the prayer focus.

Daily prayer and Christian meditation is experienced in classrooms, all of which have a sacred prayer space or prayer mat focus. Many opportunities are made available for spontaneous prayer and guided meditation.

Teachers and their classes can visit the Chapel for quiet reflection or celebration. Reflection/prayer is included in the fortnightly newsletter. Mission Day is a major event on the yearly calendar where the children raise money for Children's Mission. This raises awareness of the great need to assist others in our world.

Prayer and Reflection opportunities begin all meetings and gatherings for staff and students.

### Religious Education and Curriculum

All teachers are responsible for teaching Religion in their respective classrooms and are formally accredited to teach Religion or are in the process of satisfying the academic requirements needed to apply for accreditation.

St. James' implements the Maitland-Newcastle Diocesan K-12 Religion Syllabus. During the year classes implemented the new units of work which have been introduced in all diocesan schools. Every day each class has a structured lesson that develops the knowledge and understandings of our Catholic faith as well as a time for meditation. In Term 2 all Year 6 students participated in the Year 6 Religious Education Test, The results were mixed with some students gaining distinction and credit whilst others only participation.

Liturgical, sacramental and prayer celebrations form an important part of the Religious Education curriculum. Regular opportunities are made for the whole school to come together for worship in liturgies and prayer and singing of hymns.

The Catholic perspective is integrated into all Key Learning Areas through discussion and inclusive opportunities for all students.

### Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

Our school motto "Living and Learning in Christ" captures the spirit of our school and is a constant reminder of the importance of witness to the values of Jesus Christ in all interactions with each other and to provide an environment where learning is permeated by Gospel values.

Our annual Lenten Caritas project and annual Mission month and Community Day events are the main focus of our social justice program. Families at St James' School are extremely generous and encourage their children to continually consider the needs of others less fortunate. A specific appeal took place in Term 4 2015 to provide funds for the immersion tour to Cambodia. This tour took place in 2016 with a former teacher leading the tour.

The continuation of the PB4L pillars, Be a Learner, Be Respectful and Be Safe held the students together and saw many receive in excess of 100 'Gotchas' during the year. The buddy bench was also well utilised for the third year running. Mini Vinnies were responsible for many of these initiatives.

## Student Profile

---

The table below shows the number of students in each of the categories listed.

LBOTE*	SWD*	Indigenous
8	13	12

\*Language Backgrounds Other Than English (LBOTE); Students With Disabilities (SWD)

### Enrolment policy

St James' Primary School follows the guidelines provided by the Catholic Schools Office *Enrolment Policy 2013*. This Enrolment Policy has been devised in order to accommodate the needs of families seeking a Catholic education. It aims to set direction for school procedures and practices for enrolling students into Catholic Primary and Secondary Schools within the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle and to establish a common, consistent approach in enrolment practices and assist the system of Catholic schools to provide schooling, where possible, for all Catholic children who seek enrolment, cater for the individual needs of each child equitably within the constraints of the available teaching and material resources and to encourage parents enrolling their children in Catholic schools to give support to parish and school life, especially in education in faith.

Copies of the Policy are available from the school, or from the Catholic Schools Office website. Parents concerned about school fees should ensure they make contact with the school. Diocesan provisions (including standard discounts for those with a Health Card) exist to help in this area, and the Principal can also exercise discretion where genuine need exists.

### Actual Enrolments 2016

Scholastic Year	Number of Students
K	40
Year 1	43
Year 2	31
Year 3	46
Year 4	48
Year 5	32
Year 6	29
Total	269

### Student Attendance - K to 6 - PDF

Percentage of student attendance by Year level and school average for 2016

K	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	School Average
92.8	92.5	92.5	94.5	93.5	93.6	91.9	93.3

## Managing Student Non-attendance

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. Schools, in partnership with parents and guardians, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. The compulsory years of schooling is age 6 to 17. Principals and school staff, in consultation with students and their parents, will usually be able to resolve issues relating to non-attendance. While parents should be reminded of their legal obligations under the Education Act, (1990), the welfare of the student must be the focus of this consultation. The most effective means of restoring and maintaining regular school attendance includes sound attendance monitoring practices and regular follow-up of unexplained absences by contacting parents promptly. Resolution of attendance difficulties may require a range of additional school based strategies including student and parent interviews, reviewing the appropriateness of the student's educational program, development of a school-based attendance improvement plan, referral to the school counsellor or outside agencies and support from school - based personnel. If a range of school-based interventions has been unsuccessful, support may be requested by referring individual cases of unsatisfactory attendance to the Catholic Schools Office.

## Pastoral Care and Wellbeing

---

### Student Welfare Policy

At St. James' we believe that each person is created in the "image and likeness of God." Our educational policies, programs and practices reflect the reverence of life acknowledging the diversity of individuals and the need to respect those differences. Honouring, valuing and exploring elements of Aboriginal spirituality as well as various other cultural groups is important to the life of St. James'.

Restorative Justice principles have been the underlying process to address student interpersonal relationships throughout the year. These principles are supported through Positive Behaviours for Learning (PB4L) which fosters school community and a sense of belonging and allows children to develop an understanding of school values in an atmosphere of pastoral welfare. PB4L encourages quality learning, respect and safety at St James'.

The Pastoral Care room/Learning Support room is open at lunch times three days per week and this gives students a place in which to feel safe and welcomed. Gardening Club and Mini Vinnies are other ways students can spend lunch times if they are experiencing anxiety on the playground.

### Discipline Policy

The Discipline Policy is evaluated regularly and any amendments reflect the varying changes to school numbers, parental needs and expectations as well as environmental changes. A feature of the Policy includes the procedural fairness outlined for student behaviour. The Discipline Policy can be obtained from the school.

The full text of the School's Student Discipline Policy may be accessed on the School's website or at the administration office.

### Anti-Bullying Policy

Catholic schools have the responsibility to promote cultures of trust, cooperation and respect in the lived experience of the Catholic Christian setting. Bullying in a school mitigates such a culture and inhibits the development of positive relational outcomes for the common good of students, teachers and caregivers. *St James' Primary School Anti-Bullying Policy* is reviewed regularly and is available on the school website.

The Anti - Bullying Policy is in place to enhance behaviour management procedures and outline definitions of bullying behaviour. Students are encouraged to use the Hi 5 strategy to deal with minor issues and are expected to bring serious issues to the attention of staff where it will be dealt with promptly.

### Complaints and Grievances

The school has formal written protocols in place to address complaints and grievances. These protocols are in line with the Complaints and Grievances Resolution Policy (2013), developed to provide a consistent approach for all Diocesan schools. This policy aims to address the concerns of Parents / Carers and the wider community. These concerns may include children's learning, behaviour and welfare, school organisation and management, student health and safety issues.

A copy of this policy and the informative parent brochure is available from the school office, school website or is available on the Catholic Schools Office website.

## School Improvement

### School Improvement Plan

Goals:

9.1 Increased attention on teaching writing

15.1 WHS System management

10.1 Professional reading and development in continuing journey to becoming a PLC

### School Academic Priorities

Key improvements achieved this year	Key improvements for next year
<p>Teaching and Learning</p> <p>Goal:</p> <p>9.1 Increased attention on teaching writing</p> <p>Strategies:</p> <p>Provide professional learning opportunities for teachers in implementing the Writing strand of the English syllabus within the teaching and learning cycle.</p> <p>Use NAPLAN criteria for assessing writing.</p> <p>Participate in Professional Learning eg Seven Steps to Writing</p> <p>Collate a bank of writing samples that are mapped to the Literacy Continua as a benchmarking measure. (Diocesan Writing competition, NAPLAN writing samples)</p> <p>NAPLAN analysis of writing task from previous year. Review the NAPLAN marking guide to develop set criteria to create rubric for assessment tasks.</p> <p>Achievement:</p> <p>Improved writing skills of students as measured by NAPLAN data increase in top 2 bands and decrease in bottom 2 bands</p> <p>Teachers have increased pedagogical knowledge and effectiveness in teaching writing</p> <p>Teachers have become more familiar with grading samples</p> <p>Quality student work samples published in the year book.</p>	<p>Learning</p> <p>Goal:</p> <p>2.2 A school wide approach to education of gifted students.</p> <p>Strategies:</p> <p>Gifted Education, GE, to be given a greater focus with identification of students and specific strategies implemented.</p> <p>Provide professional learning opportunities for exec staff and teachers to understand GE.</p> <p>Use NAPLAN, norm referenced assessments and parent/teacher knowledge to identify students.</p> <p>Collate a bank of Big Questions for collaborative learning and GE groups to work with ( Maths 2017)</p> <p>Plan and program using HOT strategies to better cater for GE students.</p> <p>Lead Teachers Maths and English to supervise PLCs to ensure GE is being targeted.</p> <p>Target evidence:</p> <p>Programs highlight differentiation using HOT strategies and tasks. One activity 3 ways.</p> <p>Improved results in Maths as measured by NAPLAN data 10% increase in top 2 bands 2018</p> <p>Teachers have increased pedagogical knowledge and effectiveness in teaching GE</p> <p>For teachers to become more familiar identification strategies</p> <p>Quality student work samples are able to be published in the year book.</p>

<p>Transparency &amp; Accountability</p> <p>Goal:</p> <p>15.1 WHS system management (in progress)</p> <p>Strategies:</p> <p>Develop and Implement a school WHS system.</p> <p>Designate a driver - AP and assign AP time to work on elements using previously established policies and procedures.</p> <p>Continue to refine the PB4L discipline system</p> <p>Achievement:</p> <p>Implemented a school WHS system</p> <p>System up and running with all stakeholders involved and cooperating with the procedures.</p>	<p>Leadership</p> <p>Goal:</p> <p>3.1 School wide approach to wellbeing</p> <p>Strategies:</p> <p>Appoint a wellbeing Co-ordinator and support person</p> <p>Attend PESA conference</p> <p>Attend Bounce back training</p> <p>Implement whole school Approach</p> <p>Attend YCDI training</p> <p>Timetable change reflects priority to wellbeing</p> <p>Introduce wellbeing week - week 6 each term</p> <p>Target Evidence:</p> <p>Happy and healthier staff and students as evidenced through sick leave, reflection room data and other behaviour management data.</p>
<p>Empowered School Leadership</p> <p>Goal:</p> <p>10.1 Professional reading and development in continuing journey to becoming a PLC (in progress)</p> <p>Strategies:</p> <p>Use PLC framework to run meetings, provide observations for staff and drive decisions in the school</p> <p>Ten Minute Inservices – PLT meeting weekly discussion.</p> <p>Learn by Doing – fortnightly exec meeting discussion material.</p> <p>Teachers to understand and engage in the Professional Learning Community journey.</p> <p>Achievement:</p> <p>St James' is closer to becoming a Professional Learning Community</p>	<p>Learning</p> <p>Goal:</p> <p>2.1 Evidenced Based approaches to lift the performance of all students</p> <p>Strategies:</p> <p>Conduct specific PD in Literacy and numeracy informed by research and best practice.</p> <p>Attend Anita Chinn PD in Maths</p> <p>Attend Alison Davis PD in writing.</p> <p>Target Evidence:</p> <p>Improved ability to teach Maths and writing.</p> <p>Improved results in English and Maths</p>

## Academic Achievements

St James' is committed to offering students a wide variety of opportunities to achieve academic success in all areas.

Teachers deliver programs ensuring a sequential development of skills and knowledge throughout the grades from Kindergarten to Year 6. Our detailed Scope and Sequence of all KLAs ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are covered by each Stage.

*Throughout the year students have had the opportunity to participate in a range of events across each of the KLAs. In the area of Literacy, students participated in the Premier's Reading challenge with one student achieving platinum level. All students took part in buddy reading for World Reading Day and again during Literacy and Numeracy week. Students in Years 4 and 5 also visited local pre-schools and read to their pre-school buddies.*

During the year St James' held the annual Spelling Bee and Public Speaking competitions and it's second Maths Mentals Bee in which all students competed. Two of our students competed at the Diocesan Public Speaking finals. All class groups competed at the Upper Hunter Eisteddfod in either Choral Verse Speaking or Reader's Theatre resulting in all classes receiving a place or being highly commended.

The NAPLAN assessments are completed by students in Years 3 and 5 early in Term 2 each year. Our results in 2016 were pleasing with improvement and growth in focus areas. The UNSW International Competitions and Assessments for Schools (ICAS) are offered to students in Years 3 to 6. These assessments provide some practice for students to complete assessments in the style of NAPLAN. They also give students another opportunity for comparison against students from outside of our school. They are offered in English, Mathematics, Science, Computer Skills, Writing and Spelling. Although not many students took this opportunity those that did received a credit average. Year 6 students participate in the Year 6 Religious Education Test and are compared to other students from all NSW Dioceses. Results were slightly down from previous years but sound overall. Year 6 also participate in the Newcastle Permanent Building Society Maths competition with sound results being tabled. One student received a High Distinction, three received distinction awards and nineteen received credit awards.

Incursions from Choose Maths and Smartbots as well as songwriting with a golden guitar winning artist, Musicaviva concerts and workshops as well as a Science and Engineering Day assisted students to take their learning outside the classroom and work with professionals in these fields. Author visits, Buddy reading at preschools, setting up a reading garden at school and Book Week plays highlight the love that we share for quality literature. The library is a welcoming space for students to read, research or play board games with friends. Learning is fun at St James' and the blue 'gotcha box' is overflowing with awards that recognise student effort and achievement in learning.

## Cultural achievements

All class groups competed at the Upper Hunter Eisteddfod in either Choral Verse Speaking or Reader's Theatre resulting in all classes receiving a place or being highly commended. Individual item scores were as high as 92 out of 100 gaining first place in Primary Choir as well as first place in the sacred hymn and choral verse speaking junior section. 2nd place was gained in choral verse senior section and class vocal as well as Infant's choir.

The school community came together for a day to celebrate Indigenous literacy and culture. The school's Indigenous Teacher organised guest speakers and activities for the children to participate in for better understanding of Aboriginal culture and literature. A great book swap was also held during the year.

Students from St James' have had official roles at flag raising ceremonies, ANZAC Day services, RSL sub branch services and Country Women's Association gatherings. Students have read poems, given speeches and researched information to share with others on given topics. One student won the CWA Poster competition at State level.

## Sporting achievements

St James' Primary School had another successful year in a variety of sporting fields and participated in a variety of school based sporting activities. Sportsfun was run again by the Year 10 students from St Joseph's Aberdeen enabling Yr 3 to Yr 5 students to discover a variety of different sports.

The Infants children were able to attend Swimming Lessons in sport time which was funded by Sporting Schools Australia. This was beneficial in honing experienced swimmers skills while introducing learn to swim students to the water. St James' had 24 students represent the school at Regional level and 13 at Diocesan level.

The school had 18 students progress from the Regional Athletics Carnival to the Diocesan Carnival. Many

of these students were in more than one event. 17 students went on to represent St James' at Diocesan level with three joining the Polding team.

4 students progressed from the Diocesan Cross Country to Eastern Creek with Evelyn Howard representing St James' at State Level.

## Student Achievements

### Performance in National Testing

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an annual assessment for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. NAPLAN assessment results provide valuable information about student achievements in literacy and numeracy. An analysis of these results assists School planning and is used to support teaching and learning programs.

The tables below show the percentages of students who achieved particular skill bands in numeracy and the aspects of literacy. The School results shown are compared to students nationally. Literacy is reported in four content strands (aspects): Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation. Numeracy is reported as a single content strand.

NAPLAN RESULTS 2016		% of students in the top 3 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	Australia	School	Australia
Year 3	Reading	44.19%	49.40%	9.30%	13.30%
	Writing	51.16%	48.80%	0.00%	8.10%
	Spelling	55.81%	46.40%	9.30%	14.20%
	Grammar	39.53%	52.50%	2.33%	11.40%
	Numeracy	46.51%	35.60%	11.63%	15.20%

NAPLAN RESULTS 2016		% of students in the top 3 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	Australia	School	Australia
Year 5	Reading	42.31%	35.30%	23.08%	17.30%
	Writing	7.41%	17.20%	22.22%	19.90%
	Spelling	22.22%	29.80%	18.52%	19.00%
	Grammar	29.63%	36.30%	22.22%	16.80%
	Numeracy	18.52%	28.30%	18.52%	18.30%

## Staffing Profile

---

### Staff Qualifications

Qualifications and Experience	Number of Staff
I. Teachers with teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised by National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR).	19
II. Teachers with qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised by NOOSR but lacking formal teaching qualifications	3

One Staff member has two Master degrees and two staff members hold one Master degree. All teaching staff are fully qualified and are engaging with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers standards. All new career teachers are either accredited or working towards accreditation with AITSL. All teachers are either accredited to teach/lead Religion or are working towards this level of proficiency.

### Workforce Composition

Number of Staff	
Total teaching staff	19
Total non-teaching staff	11
Grand total	30
Percentage of teachers who are indigenous	0

### Teacher Attendance

2016 Attendance: 97%

Teacher attendance is high for the majority of teachers. There have been no sighted difficulty with attendance as morale is high and teachers are dedicated and enjoy coming to work each day.

One staff member was very ill with her pregnancy and had a great deal of time off and another was required to assist a family member who was unwell for some time. Both classes were covered by regular relief teachers and continuity was held through common programming and stage partner work. Parents were informed of the situation in a timely manner but due to the nature of the leave privacy needed to be considered first and foremost.

### Teacher Retention

2016 Retention: 100%

The teacher retention rate from 2015 to 2016 was 85%. The Religious coordinator, REC, retired after a year's leave, one teacher continued her temporary position in a neighbouring school and one teacher went on maternity leave for the second half of the year. The executive then changed with a new REC appointment. Despite this turnaround we had a very settled and successful year.

Due to the nature of employment in the local area, enrolment numbers at St James' fluctuate and as a

result the number of classes are at times affected. Some teachers who are permanently employed at St James' have small children and have either returned to work in a part-time capacity or not at all. Therefore the number of temporary positions held at St James' affects teacher retention. Teachers need permanency and stability and will seek permanency in the Diocese.

Due to the number of students and the configurations of each class St James' was granted a twelfth class for 2017.

### Professional Learning Undertaken

In 2016 all teachers undertook professional learning to redesign the way we teach writing. The PD was provided by 'Seven Steps to Writing' and was well received by all. Two executive staff then participated in a two day workshop in Brisbane to further their knowledge so that they could lead future staff PD.

Teachers taught the Seven Steps format systematically and sequentially on a whole school level. Small milestones were acknowledged with student work published in the newsletters. Some classes were more proficient than others in their progress and achievement and the reasons for this were discussed at PLT level. At the end of the year it was acknowledged that teachers would need further PD to develop their skills and the sequence would be retaught in 2017 at a quicker pace. New staff would be provided external PD as catch up and staff meetings in term one would be dedicated to writing PD.

The majority of staff meetings followed the PLC format with discussions about student performance, creating an environment where high levels of achievement in writing for all is achievable as well as other aspects of English and Maths was evident.

An inaugural whole school writing competition was launched and the best pieces were published in the year book.

Staff worked diligently and collaboratively and many changes were put in place and tweaked as we saw the need. Most of these changes have become permanent practices and procedures at St James' and are providing the environment for teachers and students to flourish.

## Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

---

The opinions and ideas of parents, students and staff are valued and sought. Their suggestions are incorporated into planning for and achieving improved outcomes for students. This year, the School has used a variety of processes to gain information about the level of satisfaction with the School from parents, students and staff.

### Parent Satisfaction

The level of community involvement in various school events is a strong indication of the support parents give to St James' and their level of satisfaction with the school. We encourage regular parent participation in classrooms and canteen and appreciate the number of parent volunteers we have each week. Parents are highly visible at our annual swimming and athletic carnivals. Our whole school performances and Presentation Day are standing room only events. Parents are willing to transport children to liturgical events in Newcastle and sporting events further afield if called upon.

Parent teacher interviews are always well attended and the feedback from the P&F is positive. Parents follow the schools' Grievance and Complaints procedure and have positive rapport with their children's teachers. I make myself available to parents and rectify problems by working together. When I ask new parents why they chose St James' they either tell me they have heard great things about the school or it was recommended to them by friends or neighbours.

Retention of student enrolments has been steady despite the economic downturn of the mining sector upon which so many families rely.

### Student Satisfaction

Year six students each write a piece for the Year Book. Every student reports having had great times at St James'. Most name the excursions and the performances as highlights of their time at St James'. Others name the great teachers and the wonderful facilities that we have as the reasons they have learned so much and had success in various academic, sporting and cultural endeavours.

The playground is a safe and happy place. Students rarely report major incidents or breaches of our code of behaviour conduct. Most student complaints are very minor and can be easily fixed using the 'Hi 5' strategy that we encourage. This strategy gives students the confidence to stop pesky and annoying or potentially harmful behaviour in its tracks. Should students not listen to the request or warning then a teacher will step in and assist the students to come to an agreement or seek an apology for the wrong doing. Major breaches are dealt with promptly and transparently with parental involvement.

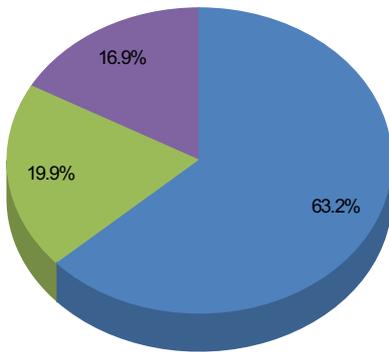
The school's pastoral care worker is also available to work through issues with students if need be. Various play spaces are available to allow students a choice of play area at break times.

### Staff Satisfaction

Staff retention for the year 2015 to 2016 was historically high. Whilst we have a number of teachers working in a part-time capacity due to family commitments we were able to offer another full time position at the end of 2016 which meant that we only had three new temporary staff to start the 2017 year. The temporary staff from the 2016 year found full time employment in the Maitland area, closer to their family home.

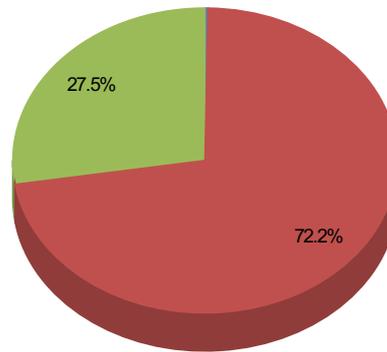
Staff morale is high with staff attending most out of hours school events and the staff dinners. The staffroom is a very noisy place with plenty of chat and discussion taking place. Staff meet regularly in smaller PLT groups and report through their minutes sound discussion on curriculum and pastoral care issues. Staff are pastorally aware of each others' needs and will go above and beyond to assist if they see a need. Staff celebrations of birthdays and special occasions are joyous events but farewells are always sad as we work closely as a team and every person is valued for their unique contribution. St James' staff is well versed in change and accepts new challenges with optimism and professionalism.

Income



- Commonwealth Recurrent Grants (63.2%)
- Government Capital Grants (0%)
- State Recurrent Grants (19.9%)
- Fees and Private Income (16.9%)
- Other Capital Income (0%)

Expenditure



- Capital Expenditure (0.3%)
- Salaries and Related Expenses (72.2%)
- Non-Salary Expenses (27.5%)

This School Financial Information is based on the detailed information provided to the Commonwealth Government in the Commonwealth Financial Questionnaire. School Financial Information for the 2016 year is detailed below:

RECURRENT and CAPITAL INCOME	
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants <sup>1</sup>	\$2,106,688
Government Capital Grants <sup>2</sup>	\$0
State Recurrent Grants <sup>3</sup>	\$661,827
Fees and Private Income <sup>4</sup>	\$563,147
Other Capital Income <sup>5</sup>	\$0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$3,331,662</b>

RECURRENT and CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	
Capital Expenditure <sup>6</sup>	\$8,393
Salaries and Related Expenses <sup>7</sup>	\$2,348,900
Non-Salary Expenses <sup>8</sup>	\$894,376
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$3,251,669</b>

**Notes**

1. Commonwealth Recurrent Grants includes recurrent per capita grants and special purpose grants.
2. Government Capital Grants includes all capital grants received from the Commonwealth and State Governments.
3. State Recurrent Grants includes recurrent grants per capita, special purpose grants and interest subsidy grants.
4. Fees and Private Income include Archdiocesan and school based fees, excursions and other private

income.

5. Other Capital Income includes building levy fees and capital donations used to fund Capital Expenditure.
6. Capital Expenditure includes expenditure on School Buildings, and Furniture and Equipment.
7. Salaries and Related Expenditure includes all salaries, allowances and related expenses such as superannuation and workers compensation insurance.
8. Non-Salary Expenses include all other Non-Salary Recurrent Expenditure covering resources, administration, operational expenses, utilities, repairs and maintenance.

## Report Access and Publication

---

This report is available to members of the school and wider communities. Copies will be supplied to the Catholic Schools Office, The Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards NSW, The Parents and Friends Association, the Parish Priest and to all parents.

Copies of this school's Annual School Report are available to the general public. Persons wishing to access a copy of the report should contact:

**Mrs Marzol Niamh**

**St James' Primary School**

**MUSWELLBROOK**

**Phone: 6543 3094**

For further information relating to the Diocesan Policy please refer to: <http://mn.catholic.edu.au>