

ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT

2017

SERVICE. LEADERSHIP. JUSTICE.

Together in Christ



St James' Primary School, MUSWELLBROOK

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About the Annual School Report

St James' Primary School is registered by NESAs 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 2017 and gives information about 2018 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

This year the whole school community engaged in Learning and Wellbeing issues that have seen great response from students and parents alike. To supplement the Arts curriculum we introduced choir, band and ukulele supported through the Upper Hunter Conservatorium. It was a very proud moment when the school band played at the school assembly at the end of Term 3., given that they had only been playing together for 14 weeks and many students had not played before.

At St James' we began the year with the Catholic Schools' Week theme, "Great learning, Great Communities". We know we are a great community and we certainly keep up the pace with great learning so this year's slogan suited our school to a tee. Through the PB4L pillars of Be a Learner, Be Respectful and Be Safe and our newly introduced Be the Spirit of Jesus, we worked together and shared times of success and joy as well as helping each other through the tougher situations. The Hi5 got a work out at times and it has been exciting to see children empowered to use it as a tool to prevent minor disputes, escalation of a situation as well as a way to restore relationships. The work we have done in Bounce Back this year is to be commended.

We have successfully undertaken some major works at school in refurbishment and maintenance. We are thankful to all parents who contribute to our ability to do this through school fee payment.

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 to be commended and celebrated we aspire to learn collaboratively and share out knowledge and understanding for the betterment of all. This year we set up a computer hub specifically designed for high level collaboration, group work and answering 'Big Questions'. Aptitude and appetite for this type of learning has been evident with many classes using the beautiful new space.

Our relationship with St. James' Parish continues to be strong even though the proximity makes it a little difficult. The 'Parish-School' Mass held each term saw a great many families join in the celebration of the Eucharist and fellowship afterwards with BBQ lunch/supper and homemade sweet refreshments courtesy of staff and Father Anthony

The support of the P&F has been tremendous again this year with many hands on deck for the St. James' Ball evening, the Father's Day Challenge, the Spring Fair and the Colour Run. I would like to thank Andrea Mulholland as president and all of the executive and members for their tireless work

Niamh Marzol - Principal

Parent Body

The Parents and Friend's Association of St James' has had another busy and productive year. We have been fortunate to receive support from so many parents and community members that we were able to make a substantial increase to the P&F bank balance this year.

As president I would like to thank the outgoing committee of Therese Bristow, Casey Zammit and Sonia Boyle. Without these ladies the workload of the P&F would have been much harder. As the outgoing president I would describe my time as rewarding, busy, productive and enjoyable. I would like to thank previous executives for their support over the past three years; Ally Dyson, Jennifer Hayes, and Rebecca Musca. I would like to thank Niamh and the staff at St James' for their ongoing commitment to the school and working with the P&F in striving to make our school a better one through all our efforts. You have helped and guided me to get the best possible outcomes always. It is tough coordinating 150+ parents and staff but working together we were able to have very pleasing and amicable outcomes.

St James' P&F held numerous events this year including :

Mother's Day and Father's Day stalls, providing a BBQ for the drama night, scones (300 of them!) for Mother's Day celebration, St James' winter ball, Father's Day activity day, St James' Spring Fair and a very successful Colour Fun run.

It doesn't seem like a lot when you put it down on paper but the work that goes into these events is paramount to the school and a reflection on a strong executive that works well together. Our fundraising

efforts have always been well supported by the school and the parents.

To the new executive I wish you all the best in your new roles. Thank you for taking on these positions. This is where friendships are formed, through helping the school our children attend be an even better one.

The P&F are looking forward to 2018 and all of the activities that the school community has organised.

Andrea Mulholland

P&F President

Student Body

Georgia Dulley- School Captain

The past six years are full of memories that I won't forget and friendships that will never end. I have made so many friends over the year. I wish all the best for everyone. Thank you St. James.

Jake Ballard - School Captain

I have been at St James' since Kinder. My favourite memory was going to Great Aussie Bush camp and going on the giant swing . I also loved going to Canberra. I loved being captain and being MC at assemblies. I really like the friends I have made here and the great teachers.

Evie Jones - Vice Captain

My time at St. James has been pretty good, from getting Vice Captain to meeting new friends and making amazing memories. The thing I love about this school is the great teachers and the excursions we go to. One of my favourite memories at this school was when I was in Year 3 and Miss Folpp sang the Evie song in front of the whole class.

Kiya Shorter - Vice Captain

I made many friends and represented St James' proudly in sport activities. I will miss St James' and my friends.

Year 6 comments taken from the Year book:

I enjoyed my time at St. James, with the friends I made, the teachers I had and what I have learnt. The best thing that happened to me was becoming Eagles sport captain and having the privilege to go to Great Aussie Bush Camp and Canberra. absolutely love the amazing staff who have worked so hard.

I really enjoyed this school. It is sad we are leaving, but most of all I loved the excursions and teachers the most. This school was fun. have some amazing memories of St James'.

I haven't been here my entire life, but for the 5 years I have been, I've loved it. I've made AMAZING friends. We've also done AWESOME things; Canberra, Great Aussie Bush Camp to name two. would like to thank all of the students and the teachers for making my last year at St James' such a success.

I have enjoyed making new friends and learning new things. I had fun on the computers and playing sport with my friends. I have enjoyed the excursions. They were GREAT

My time at St. James has been great and I have had countless memorable moments. Like the giant swing at Great Aussie Bush Camp and Questacon in Canberra. I will miss this school and my friends. 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 enjoyed and learnt how St. James is a good respectful and kind school. My fondest memory would be hanging out with my friends and how kind my teacher is. I will remember the fun times.

This is only my second year at St. James and I'm glad that I have finished year 6 at this school. I've made lots of friends and I hope to stay in touch. I'll always remember having fun in Canberraliked everything...

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 2017. 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 2017 staff and school families participated in a variety of religious celebrations both at the Church and at school.

Christian Discipleship

In 2017 St James' staff met weekly for prayer and reflection. The prayer was often led by the REC but each staff member had an opportunity to lead prayer for the staff.

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 to 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.

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 introduction of the 'Making Jesus Real' gotcha has increased our focus on God moments. The buddy bench was also well utilised for the fourth year running and the Year 6 parting gift will be a new bench for 2018. Mini Vinnies were responsible for undertaking many of these initiatives.

Student Profile

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

LBOTE*	SWD*	Indigenous
8	14	16

*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 2017

Scholastic Year	Number of Students
K	48
Year 1	38
Year 2	37
Year 3	33
Year 4	44
Year 5	49
Year 6	28
Total	277

Student Attendance - K to 6 - PDF

Percentage of student attendance by Year level and school average for 2017

K	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	School Average
92.8	93.6	93.6	94.0	91.1	93.1	92.2	92.1

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. Art Club, Library, Choir and Mini Vinnies are other ways students can spend lunch times.

Discipline Policy

The Discipline Policy is evaluated regularly and 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:

Domain 1: Religion and Spirituality

1.1.1 Create criteria for the marking of an assessment for each unit.

1.1.3. Embed Catholic Principles in to the teaching programs and KLA policies.

Domain 2: Learning

2.1.3 Staff to develop agreed whole school practices in Literacy and Numeracy.

2.1.4 Appoint lead teachers Maths/English to support PD and whole school practices.

Domain 3: Leadership

3.1.1 Whole school implementation of wellbeing program.

3.2.1 Accreditation of staff - Principal to work on PP&D with all teachers.

Domain 4: Service and Governance

4.1.1 Revise and update current policies and procedures as needed

4.1.2 Documents to be added to the newsletter to promote Bounce back and Pos Ed involvement

4.2.1 Support MNConnect project to build a quality digital learning environment for staff and students.

School Academic Priorities

Key improvements achieved this year	Key improvements for next year
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<p>Learning Objective:</p> <p>2.1 Conduct specific professional learning opportunities in Literacy and Numeracy informed by research and best practice.</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>Continue to use NAPLAN criteria for assessing writing.</p> <p>Participate in Professional Learning with Alison Davis and Seven Steps to Writing.</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. An increase to 55% of students in top two bands and a decrease to 6% of students in band 2 in Yr 3 writing. No students in band 1. Yr 5 had mixed results seeing only 8% of students in the top two bands but 68% in bands 5 and 6 and 24% in bands 3 and 4. We had an improvement in Maths in Yr 3 with 50% of students in the top two bands and less than 10% in band 2 and no students in band 1. Yr 5 had no students in band 3, 14% in band 4 and 17% in bands 7 and 8.</p> <p>Teachers gained deeper pedagogical knowledge and understanding.</p>	<p>Learning Goal:</p> <p>2.2 A school wide approach to education of gifted students. (We have not been given GEL status but we see a need to improve the opportunities for gifted learners).</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 2018)</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 2018/2019</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>
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<p>Leadership Goal:</p> <p>3.1 Whole school approach to Wellbeing</p> <p>Strategies:</p> <p>Develop and Implement a school Wellbeing approach, including designating a week for wellbeing.</p> <p>Designate a wellbeing ambassador - PC and assign time for the PC to work on elements using previously established policies and procedures and creating new ones as needed.</p> <p>Refine the PB4L system to work in conjunction with Bounce Back, MJR and YCDI.</p> <p>Achievement:</p> <p>Implemented a school Wellbeing focus and provided PD for staff by way of training staff in wellbeing initiatives and knowledge.</p> <p>Implemented Bounce Back lessons K-6 weekly in Semester 2.</p> <p>Continued association with WTAW who funded BB resources and PESA conference attendance.</p>	<p>Learning:</p> <p>Goal: 2.3 A structured approach to better meet the needs of early learners</p> <p>Strategies:</p> <p>Work with early learning teachers to understand the Early Learning Policy.</p> <p>Attend Early Learning launch</p> <p>Implement whole of stage approach to changes and strategies</p> <p>Provide resources for children in ES1 and S1 to play inside and outside the classroom.</p> <p>Meet with Kim Moroney to design play space.</p> <p>Target Evidence:</p> <p>Happier and healthier students as evidenced through behaviour and results.</p>
<p>Service and Governance Goal:</p> <p>4.1. School and family engagement - Provide parents with regular information regarding school procedures and practices in student behaviour management and wellbeing.</p> <p>Strategies:</p> <p>Revise current policies and procedures and update to CSO format.</p> <p>Include updated information in the newsletter to promote BB, MJR and PB4L</p> <p>Achievement:</p> <p>Most WHS policies were updated. Some other policies were revised as per COSI schedule. Others will be completed 2018. Parents were well informed regarding the implementation of wellbeing initiatives such as wellbeing week, Bounce Back survey and weekly lessons, MJR gotcha focus and weekly award as well as complaints and grievance procedures. These were discussed at all volunteer inductions, highlighted in the newsletter and as part of Kindergarten orientation.</p>	<p>Leadership Goal:</p> <p>3.1 School wide approach to Visible Wellbeing</p> <p>Strategies:</p> <p>Attend Visible Wellbeing Days with professor Lea Waters</p> <p>PESA conference attendance for 2 staff.</p> <p>Create a VWB team</p> <p>Blend VWB with BB, MJR and PB4L to have a weekly focus and teach explicitly on Friday afternoons.</p> <p>Target Evidence:</p> <p>Improved wellbeing across the school as captured in wellbeing survey data..</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. 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 third 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 2017 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 sound overall. Year 6 also participate in the Newcastle Permanent Building Society Maths competition with sound results being tabled.

Incursions from Musicaviva with concerts and workshops as well as establishing the school band and whole class ukulele lessons has taken music to a new level at St James'. Our association with the CSIRO and STEM projects as well as attending the local 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, the 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 and we gained many first and second places for our efforts.

The school community came together for a day to celebrate Indigenous literacy and culture. The school's Indigenous Teacher organised guest speakers, bush tucker, dance and other cultural 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.

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 a high number of students represent the school at Regional level and at Diocesan level.

The school had a number students progress from the Regional Athletics Carnival to the Diocesan Carnival. Many of these students were in more than one event.

We had a number of students successfully join Polding teams for various sports throughout the year and go on to represent the Diocese 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 2017		% of students in the top 3 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	Australia	School	Australia
Year 3	Reading	79.41%	73.90%	2.94%	10.00%
	Writing	76.47%	74.40%	5.88%	7.50%
	Spelling	82.35%	68.80%	11.76%	13.10%
	Grammar	76.47%	75.00%	8.82%	10.50%
	Numeracy	79.41%	67.10%	8.82%	11.40%

NAPLAN RESULTS 2017		% of students in the top 3 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	Australia	School	Australia
Year 5	Reading	69.39%	63.00%	16.33%	14.60%
	Writing	34.69%	47.90%	24.49%	19.40%
	Spelling	71.43%	63.00%	12.24%	14.10%
	Grammar	44.90%	59.90%	28.57%	17.50%
	Numeracy	65.31%	57.60%	14.29%	14.60%

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).	16
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

2017 Attendance: 97%

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

One staff member took extended leave. The class was covered by regular relief teachers and continuity was held through common programming and stage partner work. Parents were informed of the arrangements.

Teacher Retention

2017 Retention: 100%

The teacher retention rate from 2016 to 2017 was high. The executive stayed the same which was a welcome change. I employed three new teachers in a temporary capacity. One took the role of a full time equivalent teacher who took on a different role, another covered a part time return and another covered a new class.

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 thirteenth class for 2018.

Professional Learning Undertaken

In 2017 all teachers undertook professional learning to continue the PD in 2016 which was to redesign the way we teach writing. The PD was provided by Alison Davis and was well received by all. Two days was given to practical ways to teach writing. These workshop held in Newcastle were enhanced by the purchase of professional reading/ texts written by Alison to further knowledge so that teachers could make changes to their pedagogy. and practice.

Teachers continued to teach the Seven Steps format systematically and sequentially on a whole school level but a quicker pace than in 2016. Milestones were again 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. Looking forward new staff will be provided PD as catch up in staff meetings in term one 2018.

2017 also saw a renewed focus on Mathematics and Anita Chin spent two days at St James' working with teachers and students to demonstrate best practice. Her input was invaluable and the lead teacher then made good use of the AMSI partnership to drive further PD opportunities and classroom practice discussions and observations.

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.

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 to increasing due to the local economic situation.

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.

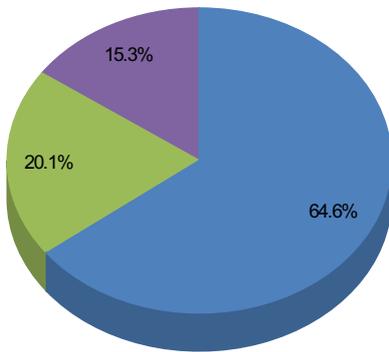
The school's pastoral care worker is also available to work through issues with students if need be. Various play spaces are available to allow students a choice of play area at break times.

Staff Satisfaction

Staff retention for the year 2016 to 2017 was historically high. Whilst we had a number of teachers working in a part-time capacity due to family commitments we were able to offer three full time position at the end of 2017 which meant that we only had two new temporary staff to start the 2018 year. Most temporary staff from the 2017 year found full time employment at St James' for 2018.

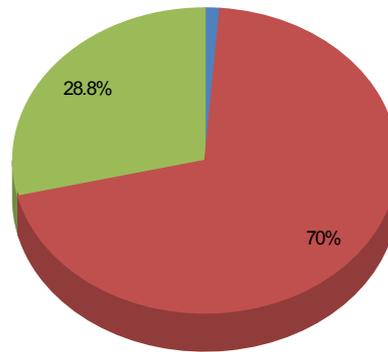
Staff morale is quite high with staff attending most out of hours school events and staff events. The focus on Wellbeing gave staff new strategies to deal with stress and work issues. The staffroom is a very noisy place with plenty of chat and discussion taking place. Staff meet regularly in smaller 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 (64.6%)
- Government Capital Grants (0%)
- State Recurrent Grants (20.1%)
- Fees and Private Income (15.3%)
- Other Capital Income (0%)

Expenditure



- Capital Expenditure (1.3%)
- Salaries and Related Expenses (70%)
- Non-Salary Expenses (28.8%)

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 2017 year is detailed below:

RECURRENT and CAPITAL INCOME	
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants ¹	\$2,509,319
Government Capital Grants ²	\$0
State Recurrent Grants ³	\$780,655
Fees and Private Income ⁴	\$592,904
Other Capital Income ⁵	\$17
Total Income	\$3,882,895

RECURRENT and CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	
Capital Expenditure ⁶	\$46,915
Salaries and Related Expenses ⁷	\$2,609,011
Non-Salary Expenses ⁸	\$1,072,361
Total Expenditure	\$3,728,287

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, NESA, 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:

St James' Primary School

MUSWELLBROOK

Phone: 6543 3094

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