



Catholic  
Schools Office  
DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

# ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT

# 2015

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 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

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### Principal's Message

2015 was an exciting year of my Principalship at St James' Primary School, Muswellbrook. During 2015 St James' embarked on a Professional Learning Community (PLC) journey as part of the school's Improvement Plan. All staff received initial professional development to outline the framework with the executive staff embarking on a series of professional development sessions with St Joseph's Merriwa to continue our understanding of the framework. The three main ideas behind becoming a PLC are a focus on Learning, a focus on Collaboration and a focus on Results. St James' is proud to say that we were very proactive in implementing changes to align ourselves more fully with these focus areas.

#### Focus On Learning

St James' continued the practice of sacred Literacy and Numeracy blocks. This non-interrupted teaching time gave the teachers time to explicitly teach new content to the highest level of expectation, guide students through learning sequences, work in small groups with students who need scaffolding and support and give higher order thinking tasks to deepen understanding for those who have satisfactorily achieved the outcomes. Assessment for, of and as became a major focus of planning time so as to best assess progress. Learning for All became our new mantra.

#### Focus on Collaboration

The second main idea within the PLC framework saw major changes to our meeting practices. St James' staff were grouped into Professional Learning Teams. Each team was made up of stage teachers, an executive member and other members of the non teaching staff. Each week these groups met to discuss professional readings, plan and design assessment tasks and construct marking criteria. Teams also worked together one day per term to decide upon essential learning for the following term in Maths and design criteria for assessment success. The four main questions teachers have at the fore of their collaborative planning time are:

1. What knowledge and skills should every student acquire as a result of this unit of instruction?
2. How will we know when each student has acquired the essential knowledge and skills?
3. How will we respond when some students do not learn?
4. How will we extend and enrich the learning for students who are already proficient?

At the end of the year it was decided that in 2016 each stage would have a 'no new teaching time' in Maths and fluidly group students so as to deepen learning for some and consolidate skills and understanding for others.

#### Focus on Results

St James' NAPLAN results were very pleasing as were the student placements on the Learning Continuum and Standardised test results in 2015. We had above State average gains in Literacy and Numeracy in over 70% of the student population in NAPLAN and were recognised by ACARA for the improvement.

I am very fortunate to have a skilled and dedicated staff who have worked tirelessly to provide quality learning experiences to help all students learn at high levels. It has been a fantastic year.

### Parent Body

Firstly I would like to thank the outgoing committee for all their help, support and dedication. I think working together we have had a very positive and productive year.

We started the year off with the Autumn fair in March. This was a wonderful fun filled evening for St

James' community and the Muswellbrook community as a whole. Without the hard work from Therese Bristow and Sally Jackson and the previous committee as well as helpers from within the school, the Fair

wouldn't have been the success in which it was.

We had our big car raffle in April and although slow to take off we got there in the end with ticket sales. Again a lot of planning and hard work went into this from Lisa Gill who was championed on by staff and parents. Mrs Doreen Abrahamse won the car and was thrilled with her prize.

In May we had our Mother's Day stall and disco. This again was a massive success with all children enjoying the purchasing that special gift for mum. The disco theme was 'dress as mum' which went down well with the children. We also had a photo booth up and running and we served dinner to mums and their

children that night too.

In July we had our St James' Ball. This was a glamorous fun filled night. Lisa Gill left the school but before doing so had provided all the necessary arrangements in order for the ball to run as smoothly as possible. The hall looked amazing and everyone had a ball (pardon the pun). This night would not have been possible without the help of everyone, from assistance with flower arrangements, decoration, ticket sales as well as cleaning the hall the next day.

We tried to run a Father's Golf day in September but unfortunately Mother Nature was not on our side and it has to be cancelled due to a storm. Our new proposed date in November (although it rained again) was not a financial success but definitely a community success. It done exactly what we set out to do and that was to bring the fathers of St James' together.

The P&F also ran a chocolate drive in October. This was financially successful.

In December we worked along side the staff to cater for the school's drama night. Again it was a fantastic night with credit given to the staff for pulling off such a great show.

During Term 3 the P&F put out a parent survey asking parents where they would like to see the fundraising money spent. The new fans for the hall was the clear winner and these have provided us with much needed circulation of air during some very muggy afternoons. The kids have benefited from these also as it gives them that bit of relief when they are there during assembly and liturgies.

We were astonished and amazed by the turn out at Grandparent's Day. There had to be a few extra runs to the shops to get extra snacks and food. Grandparents loved being part of this day and teachers put on great fun filled tasks for all to do.

My only hope is that the 2016 year is as productive and that the new committee works together as well as we have done for the 2015 year.

Andrea Mulholland

P&F President

## Student Body

*Isabelle Dimmock - School Captain*

I have been at St James' since Kinder and have met so many good friends and made so many great memories. I have been on plenty of excursions such as Canberra and The Great Aussie Bush Camp. I have been very proud to be the school Captain for 2015. I have enjoyed all of the sporting events and have loved every second of being here. Thank you St James'.

*Haydn Portolan - School Captain*

I have been at St James' since Kinder and have loved every year. My favourite memory at St James' was being elected School Captain. I loved hanging out with my friends and going on excursions.

*Hannah Gee - Vice Captain*

I have been blessed with amazing friends and have great memories of having fun at lunch times. It has been an honour to be a School Vice Captain.

*Year 6 comments taken from the Year book:*

I would love to thank all of the teachers and this beautiful school for a wonderful last year here.

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.

I really enjoyed my time at St James'.

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 will miss everything about the school.

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 have enjoyed my time immensely.

At St James' everyone respects you.

## SCHOOL FEATURES

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### 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

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### Catholic Imagination and Spirituality

Religious symbols, both traditional and contemporary, are visible throughout the school environment and each classroom has a prayer focus space. 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 prayer. It is a sacred space that is open for parents and students to use. The hall also boasts an altar and is used for school Mass and liturgies. We celebrate all major feast days and special occasions with either a Mass or liturgy or if more appropriate a prayer.

Staff pray together each week in the chapel before moving off for professional development or to work collaboratively in their Professional Learning Teams. Each week a staff member takes the responsibility of preparing the prayer using a variety of resources

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 endeavoured to work closely with the Parish and the wider community during 2015. 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 2015 staff and school families participated in a variety of religious celebrations both at the Church and at school.

### Christian Discipleship

In 2015 St James' introduced 'Pedagogy at the pub'. The staff met once per term at a local Hotel to discuss spiritual matters with Fr Anthony and Deacon Gerard or members of the RE and Spirituality Team from the CSO. The first meeting saw the staff complete a previous Year 6 Religion assessment task with all scoring above 90%. The conversation that ensued was very informative. Subsequent meetings focused on the Beatitudes and Sacraments.

Daily prayer 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 classes 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 Caritas Lenten 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 will take place in 2016 with a former teacher leading the tour.

Bunting with student pledges against bullying provided a wonderful visual display along the verandahs and were a great source of strength and solidarity for the students. 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 second year running. Mini Vinnies were responsible for many of these initiatives.

## Student Profile

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

LBOTE*	SWD*	Indigenous
8	16	11

\*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 2015

Scholastic Year	Number of Students
K	40
Year 1	33
Year 2	44
Year 3	43
Year 4	31
Year 5	29
Year 6	31
Total	251

### Student Attendance - K to 6 - PDF

Percentage of student attendance by Year level and school average for 2015

K	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	School Average
92.1	91.6	91.6	91.7	92.3	91.8	91.8	91.9

## 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

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### 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 has been 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.

### 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:

3.1 High quality staff to deliver identified strategic priorities.

3.2 Contemporary and consistent approach to strategic recruitment and performance review

5.1 Contemporary high quality teaching and learning

### School Academic Priorities

Key improvements achieved this year	Key improvements for next year
<p>Goal:</p> <p>3.1 High quality staff to deliver identified strategic priorities.</p> <p>Strategies:</p> <p>Balanced teaching of Literacy block and Numeracy block in alignment with new curriculum in English and SAP focus areas. Liaise with LST to ensure appropriate differentiation of curriculum- Intervention for Tier 2 and 3 students.</p> <p>Achievements:</p> <p>IP goals are embedded in programs.</p> <p>Students are working to a higher level than before.</p> <p>Students can articulate lesson and individual learning goals.</p> <p>Teachers had opportunities to work with Leading Teacher, CSO staff and Education Officer to develop pedagogy.</p> <p>Focus On Reading</p> <p>Writing PD – Leading Teacher</p> <p>Anita Chin - Mathematics</p> <p>Teachers worked consistently during the year to plan and implement high quality teaching and learning sequences which focused on essential learnings. Students were engaged in tracking their progress using visual cues in the classroom and could articulate the learning goal for the lesson/unit of work. Criteria for success was developed for assessment tasks and students were given detailed feedback on their achievements.</p>	<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 bench marking 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>Target evidence:</p> <p>Improved writing skills of students as measured by NAPLAN data 10%increase in top 2 bands and 10% decrease in bottom 2 bands</p> <p>Teachers have increased pedagogical knowledge and effectiveness in teaching writing</p> <p>For teachers to become more familiar with grading samples</p> <p>Quality student work samples are able to be published in the year book.</p>

<p>Goal: Contemporary high quality teaching and learning</p> <p>Strategies: Broad and Differentiated curriculum for ALL students. Tier 1 multi exit points using Higher order strategies and tasks. Differentiation of teaching and assessment as and for learning being guided by high expectations and deep knowledge and understanding. Use 4 key questions of PLC/QTF for every unit/lesson MiniLit Intervention K-2 Multi lit 3-6 intervention Lexia for tier 3 students Plot K-6 students on Literacy / Numeracy Continuum</p> <p>Achievements: The school had a renewed focus on Learning, on Collaboration and on Results by working through professional development sessions and readings on how to become a Professional Learning Community. Professional Learning Teams discuss multi-level entry and exit points as a priority and fluidly group students for Maths and English. Students are placed in groups where they are either given higher order tasks if they already know the content or skill or a scaffold and small group assistance if they need consolidation or intervention. Differentiation of the same task is common practice. Student achievement is plotted and monitored closely. Intervention is put in place quickly if needed.</p>	<p>Empowered School Leadership</p> <p>Goal: 10.1 Professional reading and development in continuing journey to becoming a PLC (in progress)</p> <p>Strategies: Use PLC framework to run meetings, provide observations for staff and drive decisions in the school Ten Minute Inservices – PLT meeting weekly discussion. Learn by Doing – fortnightly exec meeting discussion material. Teachers to understand and engage in the Professional Learning Community journey.</p> <p>Target Evidence: St James' to become a PLC/closer to the becoming a PLC</p>
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<p>Goal:</p> <p>3.2 Contemporary and consistent approach to strategic recruitment and performance review</p> <p>Strategies:</p> <p>Teachers to be made aware of AITSL requirements for teachers and use to set goals</p> <p>Lesson recording and feedback by peer teachers and self for Quality teaching and alignment with AITSL standards.</p> <p>Teacher set goals in Term 1 and review in Term 3.</p> <p>Achievement:</p> <p>Staff set professional goals and worked to achieve these with assistance of Coach/mentor.</p> <p>Staff met regularly as a PLT and worked collaboratively to plan teaching and learning sequences and assessment.</p> <p>Staff used their time with a mentor to reflect on current pedagogical practice and seek feedback on areas for development. Teachers were very open to being given constructive criticism of their lessons by their mentors with the knowledge that it was for their professional improvement and ultimately the achievement of the students.</p> <p>Staff were proactive in seeking professional development and professional readings on areas for development. The staff library was widely used. PLT time was given to professional reading and discussion.</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>Target Evidence:</p> <p>Implement a school WHS system</p> <p>System up and running with all stakeholders involved and cooperating with the procedures.</p>
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## 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 an inaugural Maths Mentals Bee in which all students competed. Two of our four students won their stage Regional Final. 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 Coal festival debating competition saw the St James' team place second in the Upper Hunter section. The students then went on to win the Upper Hunter Section of the Diocesan competition later in the year but were knocked out at the quarter final stage.

The NAPLAN assessments are completed by students in Years 3 and 5 early in Term 2 each year. Our results in 2015 were very pleasing overall with great improvement and growth in most areas. St James' boasted higher than the State average gains and were recognised by ACARA for this. 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.

## 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 sacred hymn and choral verse 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 put on a high quality production at the end of the year. Each class performed a scene to piece together the production of 'A Night in the Woods'. Each class sang, danced and acted with poise and pizzaz. The show was a huge success and the audience very appreciative of the effort that went into creating such a polished show.

## 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 9 swimmers represent the Upper Hunter region at the Diocesan Swimming Carnival.

The school had 13 students progress from the Regional Athletics Carnival to the Diocesan Carnival. Many of these students were in more than one event.

5 students progressed from the Diocesan Cross Country to Eastern Creek with Evelyn Howard coming 9th in her age group. Matilda Jones succeeded in reaching the State Touch Football team and Amber Morgan and Heidi Richards also reached excellence by being in the Polding Touch Team that participated in the State Carnival.

## Student Achievements

### Performance in National Testing

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an annual assessment for student 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 2015		% of students in the top 3 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	Australia	School	Australia
Year 3	Reading	78.05%	71.10%	2.44%	12.90%
	Writing	90.24%	75.80%	0.00%	9.30%
	Spelling	70.73%	65.20%	2.44%	16.70%
	Grammar	87.80%	73.20%	0.00%	12.60%
	Numeracy	71.05%	60.80%	5.26%	16.80%

NAPLAN RESULTS 2015		% of students in the top 3 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	Australia	School	Australia
Year 5	Reading	51.72%	57.90%	20.69%	20.00%
	Writing	60.71%	52.40%	10.71%	19.50%
	Spelling	62.07%	60.80%	24.14%	14.60%
	Grammar	62.07%	60.90%	17.24%	18.60%
	Numeracy	44.83%	55.80%	20.69%	17.60%

## Staffing Profile

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### 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	1

### Teacher Attendance

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

### Teacher Retention

The teacher retention rate from 2014 to 2015 was 77%. The Religious Coordinator retired, The Primary Coordinator took on a promotional position at another school, a classroom teacher went on maternity leave and then took a teaching position in a neighbouring town where her children go to school and the Aboriginal Education Officer/Teacher took on a special project with the DEC. Six new teachers joined St James' staff in 2015. The executive changed completely with a new Assistant Principal, a new Primary Coordinator and a new Religious Coordinator. The Lead teacher also changed. 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.

### Professional Learning Undertaken

In 2015 all teachers and Learning Support Staff undertook professional learning to embark on the journey to become a Professional Learning Community. The PD was provided by Hawker Brownlow and was well received by all. The executive staff then spent time working through the framework and with the assistance of veteran principal and PLC expert, Colin Sloper worked alongside a neighbouring school to plan the implementation of the three big focus ideas.

The majority of staff meetings pertained to the PLC framework and discussions about student performance and creating an environment where high levels of achievement for all was evident.

Staff worked very 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' are providing the environment for teachers and students to flourish.

## Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

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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 flock to our annual swimming and athletic carnivals, and our end of year performance and presentation day are always 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 employ. 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 apologise for the wrong doing. Major breaches are dealt with promptly and transparently with parental involvement.

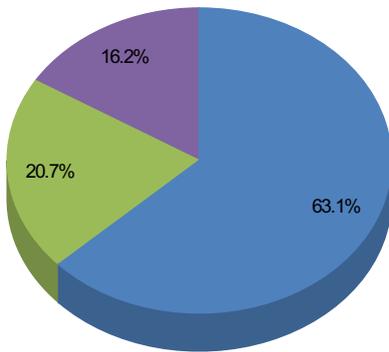
The school's pastoral care worker is also available to work through issues with students if need be. Various play spaces are available to allow students a choice of play area at break times.

### Staff Satisfaction

Staff retention for the year 2014 to 2015 was historically quite high and even higher from 2015 to 2016. 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 2015 which meant that we only had two new temporary staff to start the 2016 year. The temporary staff from the 2015 year found full time employment in the Maitland area, closer to their family home.

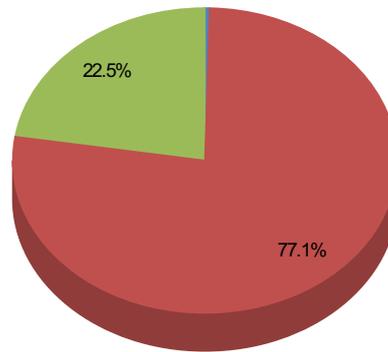
Staff morale is high with staff attending most out of hours school events and the staff dinners. The staffroom is a very noisy place with plenty of chat and discussion taking place. Staff meet regularly in smaller PLT groups and report through their minutes sound discussion on curriculum and pastoral 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 (63.1%)
- Government Capital Grants (0%)
- State Recurrent Grants (20.7%)
- Fees and Private Income (16.2%)
- Other Capital Income (0%)

Expenditure



- Capital Expenditure (0.4%)
- Salaries and Related Expenses (77.1%)
- Non-Salary Expenses (22.5%)

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 2015 year is detailed below:

RECURRENT and CAPITAL INCOME	
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants <sup>1</sup>	\$2,015,555
Government Capital Grants <sup>2</sup>	\$0
State Recurrent Grants <sup>3</sup>	\$661,708
Fees and Private Income <sup>4</sup>	\$518,374
Other Capital Income <sup>5</sup>	\$0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$3,195,637</b>

RECURRENT and CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	
Capital Expenditure <sup>6</sup>	\$12,596
Salaries and Related Expenses <sup>7</sup>	\$2,375,945
Non-Salary Expenses <sup>8</sup>	\$693,610
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$3,082,151</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

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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 Parent 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:

**Mr Ashley Borg**

**St James' Primary School**

**MUSWELLBROOK**

**Phone: 6543 3094**

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