



Catholic
Schools Office
DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT

2015

SERVICE † LEADERSHIP † JUSTICE
Together in Christ



St Columba's Primary School, ADAMSTOWN

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About the Annual School Report

St Columba's 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

Our school has enjoyed great success with achievements in the academic, cultural and sporting fields. Our students flourish in an environment that provides expansive learning activities and the opportunity to perform and grow. The school is enhanced by a rich spiritual life that celebrates our catholic traditions, is centred on the teachings of Jesus and the charism of our founders, the Mercy Sisters. St Columba's Primary School Adamstown has been able to bring about significant improvements in curriculum, student's achievement, leadership development and building teacher capacity under the School Improvement (SIP) program. The program included the provision of a Lead Teacher to support learning and pedagogy which focused on the teaching of mathematics K – 6. As always, our school community has prospered with the strong support of parents, the P & F Association and the wider community. This opportunity to report on the school community allows for recognition and acknowledgement of the work done by the school community, the teaching and administrative staff, the parents and students in continued the development of this school. The work undertaken in 2015 has positioned the school well for the futur

Parent Body

The 2015 school year saw much activity from the St Columba's P & F Association with their substantial fundraising efforts contributing to a number of benefits for our school. Activities throughout the year included Raffles, the Wine & Cheese Night, a fantastic Trivia Night, the sale of Entertainment Books Mothers' and Fathers' Day stalls, School Discos, the TAFE dinner and, of course the Sportsman's Lunch. For the first time we held a Wine & Cheese evening which proved to be both popular and profitable. These activities helped raise a considerable sum of money to strengthen the P & F's finances. The school canteen was able to increase its operation to three days per week with the support of parent volunteers. Not only is the canteen an important service to the students, it also provides a regular stream of income, which allows the P & F Association to maintain its contribution to various school projects. Several projects benefited from P & F funding this year including: Completion of a kitchen garden scheme; New Ipads and laptops for classrooms; and the purchase of additional maths resources for classrooms. The strong support base of volunteers within the school covers activities such as reading, library, canteen, sport, transport, grounds maintenance, fundraising etc. Class liturgies and School Masses are well attended by parents and the wider parish community. Our volunteers perform a vital role in helping to contribute to the growth and development of our school community. The hard work by all volunteers is greatly appreciated and provides many tangible benefits to our school. The students of St Columba's thank those who have contributed in the past and also those that are able to contribute into the future. Rachel Hahn (P & F President)

Student Body

St Columba's aims to give every Year 6 student the experience of leadership within the school therefore, we do not elect captains. Leadership is the conduit for personal growth and for a positive school environment. The school formally inducts the whole Year 6 cohort into their leadership roles at the Opening School Mass. Student leaders are expected to work cooperatively and support their school, taking on and sharing the many responsibilities that go with the role. It is an interesting fact that while most Australian schools focus on reducing bullying and developing school culture that they look to promoting student leadership as one of the key strategies. Research shows that student leaders share three personal characteristics that make them less likely to be subject to harassment: i.e. high social skills, empathy and trust, and a healthy self-esteem. The opportunity that leadership gives our Year 6 group will hopefully lead all students to acquire all these attributes.

SCHOOL FEATURES

History of the school

Established in the 1890's by the Sisters of Mercy, St. Columba's Primary School has continuously served the needs of the Catholic community of Adamstown. The school continues to have a close connection with the order and its charism. The Sisters travelled from the larger convent at Hamilton until a new residence was built here in Adamstown opposite the school. Since the retirement of Sr. Mary Regina Donoghue in December 1986, the school has been staffed entirely by lay teachers. In 2011 the school underwent a major refurbishment and building program under the BER (Building Education Revolution) which replaced 3 classrooms, created a new library, canteen, toilet block redesigned the upper primary rooms and added a COLA area.

Location/Drawing Area

St Columba's Primary School enrolls students who usually live in the suburbs of Adamstown and Adamstown Heights, Kotara, Merewether, Broadmeadow and Hamilton. We also enrol students who live in other areas but where family circumstances require a placement in the Adamstown area.

Catholic Identity and Mission

Catholic Imagination and Spirituality

We acknowledge the Awabakal people as the traditional owners of the land on which our school was built. There is a strong relationship between a child's intellectual development, religious faith and personal growth. We explicitly teach those values that are wholesome and life-giving. Prayer is important in our school, as are the celebration of liturgy and an experience of a living faith. We remember with gratitude, the heritage in education left for us by the Sisters of Mercy. Our school vision statement was recently reviewed and is representative of our aspirations as a learning community. The school celebrates its Catholic identity by having a sacred space in each classroom and by celebrating important events in the church's calendar as well as special days in the lives of our students and families like Mother's day, Father's Day, Grandparent's Day, NAIDOC etc..

Family, Parish and Diocesan evangelising and catechesis

The school actively participates in the life of our parish of St Columba's. Year 6 student leaders attended the diocesan Catholic Schools Week mass held in Newcastle as well as other diocesan and local events. Major feast days are often celebrated with the parish and school joining together for Wednesday mass. The school also works in close partnership with the Parish Initiation Team with our Parish Liaison officer, Ms Helene O'Neil providing an important link between parish and school. Regular communication is maintained via regular meetings between priest, principal and REC and through representation parish bodies.

Christian Discipleship

Catholic schools have a religious purpose and a religious life. Our school shares a common mission to educate and form students as disciples of Jesus and is part of the mission of the parish to which we belong. We offer students experiences of following Jesus as members of the Catholic community. We do this as a partnership of staff, parents, parish priest and the Diocese. We offer the students experiences of following Jesus as members of the Catholic community. There is a focus on practical community outreach and support for Catholic agencies such as Caritas Australia (Project Compassion in Lent), the St Vincent de Paul Society (Winter and Christmas Appeals) and Catholic Mission (especially leading to October, which is Mission Month). We have 'Mini Vinnies' and conduct mission project events.

Religious Education and Curriculum

The classroom teaching of Religion flows out from aims and outcomes set out in the Diocesan K-6 Religion syllabus. The syllabus has four major strands which include: Jesus and Scripture, History and Beliefs Celebration and Prayer and Justice and Morality. Teachers develop units of work based on each of these strands for use in the learning program. Teaching staff took part in a number of professional development opportunities offered by the Catholic Schools Office. These covered topics in the teaching of religion, church, spirituality and personal faith development. Liturgy and prayer is a distinguishing feature of the cultural and faith life of our school and information on these can be accessed via the school website.

Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

The promotion of respect and responsibility is at the foundation of the school's behaviour management and pastoral care policies. These values also underpin our well-being program under the Kidsmatter umbrella. The Bounce Back program is explicitly taught and promoted K-6 as part of the PDHPE learning area. It is intended that this will have a positive impact all aspects of school life. Support for those less privileged is always high on the agenda and the school was active in raising funds to support the work of Catholic Missions, SIMS, Mercy Works, Caritas Australia and St Vincent de Paul. Students participated in the local Anzac Day March and our visited local nursing homes. Fund raising activities for various Mission and community charities, particularly those run by Catholic organisations such as Caritas and Catholic Mission.

Student Profile

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

LBOTE*	SWD*	Indigenous
7	4	5

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

Enrolment policy

St Columba's 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	22
Year 1	29
Year 2	28
Year 3	28
Year 4	29
Year 5	30
Year 6	26
Total	192

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
95.1	93.8	93.8	94.3	95.2	94.3	92.7	94.4

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

St Columba's has developed its own Pastoral Care policy to assist in the provision of a safe and secure environment for all students. We recognise that positive relationships are important in achieving and maintaining a happy and productive school environment. The Year 5 and 6 students support kindergarten students through an established Buddy Program. The school has also operated the Seasons for Growth program which is designed to assist children in dealing with grief issues associated with loss or separation experiences. A full copy of the Pastoral Care policy can be obtained by contacting the principal. No changes have been made to this policy since 2013.

Discipline Policy

The school's behaviour support framework supports the teaching and development of positive behaviours. It offers us a school-wide approach to address problem behaviour and reduce its effects on student outcomes and on the school community as a whole. The school has introduced the Bounce Back program K - 6 to improve their self-concept, resilience and social-emotional skills. The guiding principles are that behaviour can be changed and environments can be changed to change behaviour. The Principal and staff clearly inform students and parents of student expectations and school rules. Parents work closely with the teaching staff through effective communication, consistency of approach and positive reinforcement, including weekly Bounce Awards, frequent use of "Blueys" to acknowledge positive behaviour and Principal's awards. No form of corporal punishment is used at St Columba's. A copy of the Policy is available from the School Office

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 Columba's 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

School Improvement Priorities included:

- Implementation of new Australian curriculum in Mathematics, English and Science & Technology syllabuses;
- A focus on improving Mathematics results across the board;
- A focus on lifting the performance of high achievers in mathematics;
- “Focus on Reading” professional development;
- Focus on the quality of teaching practice through the establishment of professional learning teams;
- Implementation and launch of Bounce Back and Kidsmatter well-being initiatives;
- Infrastructure and ICT upgrade.

School Academic Priorities

Key improvements achieved this year	Key improvements for next year
<p>Focus on the quality of teaching practice through the establishment of professional learning teams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Improvement in NAPLAN results in both Years 3 & 5.■ Alignment in assessment strategies across all grades.■ Best practice achieved through the development of agreed practice in maths.■ Maths teaching supported by appropriate resource base.	<p>Focus on quality practice and intervention in mathematics through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The appointment of a Leading Teacher to work with class teachers.■ Utilizing professional learning team's and intervention to identify and support students to achieve greater proficiency.■ Building on agreed practice in teaching, assessment and planning.■ Continuing mathematics extension groups Year 2-6.

<p>Focus on lifting the performance of high achievers in mathematics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ higher number of A and B grades achieved. ▪ greater percentage of students in higher bands Year 5 NAPLAN numeracy. ▪ increased motivation of students. ▪ Greater confidence demonstrated by teachers in the teaching of mathematics. 	<p>Strengthen the implementation and use of Learning Technologies in the classroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop skills and knowledge through professional learning opportunities. ▪ Build teacher capacity and confidence in using LT. ▪ Explore opportunities for enhancing student learning through inter-school sharing.
<p>Implementation and launch of Bounce Back and Kidsmatter well-being initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a more positive school culture. ▪ children learning skills for good social and emotional development. ▪ building a stronger relationship with families. ▪ empowering students to deal with difficult situations and challenges. 	<p>A more contemporary approach to the teaching of Spelling as part of English:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Build a more consistent approach to the teaching of English by engaging a consultant to develop understandings in the key elements of teaching Spelling and Grammar. ▪ Build a greater understanding of the four spelling knowledges: Phonological, Visual, Morphemic and Etymological. ▪ Whole school focus on explicitly teaching children how to make word choices when they go to write and address the spelling skills linked as such. ▪ Linking the explicit teaching of spelling to the explicit teaching of writing.

Academic Achievements

We value academic excellence and accept the task of providing the best possible education for our students, giving emphasis to the literacy and numeracy skills required for both learning and life. The school's academic program is enhanced by a number of enrichment activities such as our Gifted & talented program, the Diocesan Debating competition; Newcastle Permanent Maths competition; NSW University Competitions in key learning areas; Public Speaking; and Book Week. This is supported by ongoing professional development for all teaching staffing. The school uses a variety of assessment strategies at key points in the learning framework. These include teacher observation, student projects and presentations. The school also participates in the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) for the purposes of diagnosing individual learning needs and reviewing whole class teaching programs. Information on student progress is communicated on a regular basis and external assessment results are discussed with parents on an individual basis annually.

Cultural achievements

There a a range of co-curricula activities available to students at St Columba's including violin and guitar tuition. Classes take part in Operation Art each year with a number of our students having their work selected for display in the program. Students also take part in programs by the Adamstown library , the Combined school's ANZAC ceremony and drama presentation. A variety of excursions were also undertaken by individual classes including visits to the Hunter Life Education Centre, the Glenrock State Recreation Area, Wetlands, Fighter World, The Australian Reptile Park and the Civic Theatre. The Year 5 Leadership Camp was held at The Retreat Port Stephens, and Year 6 had an excursion to Canberra visiting Old and New Parliament House, the Electoral Education Centre, National Science and Technology Centre (Questacon), Institute of Sport and the National Museum of Australia.

Sporting achievements

We value our long tradition of participation and achievement in a wide range of sporting activities. Many of our students were able to successfully benefit from the pathways sports at school, regional, diocesan and state level. Two students achieved the highest of awards by gaining first place in state level for athletics in their chosen sport. Students competed in swimming, athletics, cross country, and the summer and winter sports. Students gained selection in the NSW PSSA for Basketball and Softball. Gymnastics became a whole school program in term 2. Teams competed in the Central Region Soccer Gala Day, and the Diocesan Netball Gala Day where the junior team won their division. Boys in Years 5 and 6 played in the Paul Harragon Cup for Rugby League. A focus in the school is the acquisition of a wide range of skills, appropriate to age and development, through opportunities for daily physical activity and weekly Sport. At the Athletics Carnival, all students participated in age races, long jump, shot put and ball games.

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	85.19%	71.10%	3.70%	12.90%
	Writing	96.15%	75.80%	0.00%	9.30%
	Spelling	84.62%	65.20%	0.00%	16.70%
	Grammar	100.00%	73.20%	0.00%	12.60%
	Numeracy	77.78%	60.80%	7.41%	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	81.48%	57.90%	0.00%	20.00%
	Writing	44.44%	52.40%	3.70%	19.50%
	Spelling	92.59%	60.80%	3.70%	14.60%
	Grammar	70.37%	60.90%	0.00%	18.60%
	Numeracy	59.26%	55.80%	7.41%	17.60%

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).	12
II. Teachers with qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised by NOOSR but lacking formal teaching qualifications	0

Workforce Composition

Number of Staff	
Total teaching staff	12
Total non-teaching staff	5
Grand total	17
Percentage of teachers who are indigenous	0

Teacher Attendance

The average teacher attendance rate for this school is 96%.

Teacher Retention

The teacher retention rate from 2014 to 2015 was 91.7%. One teacher retired in 2015.

Professional Learning Undertaken

As part of the school's professional development plan there was a strong focus on Literacy, Numeracy, Learning Technologies and Spirituality. Notwithstanding, the following courses were attended at either school, system or state level:

- The Australian curriculum - History & English;
- Focus on Reading (Teaching Reading 3-6 Comprehension)
- Teaching & Learning– the Marzano model;
- The Spirituality of Teaching (Richard Leonard);
- Mental health & Kidsmatter; Mathematics,
- Critical incident planning;
- CPR; Emergency Care
- Leadership Co-Coaching- Assistant Principal, Primary Coordinator
- Science Syllabus Inservice

- Smart Data NAPLAN Analysis
- Achieving Success in Teaching Maths
- BOSTES Teaching Standards- Jane Scahill
- Mathematics K-6: Anita Chin Demonstration Lessons and workshops and professional in-servicing with Catherine Attar

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

As part of an annual review process, representatives of the parent body, senior students and staff were asked to reflect on a number of key areas: school management; the Catholic identity of the school, quality of care, standards of teaching and learning, quality of school buildings and grounds. The responses overall were both positive and constructive and provided clear direction for planning in the future. Specific student responses indicated that St Columba's is a safe place to learn where they feel respected. They enjoy appropriate and good relationships with teachers who care about them. Other areas of satisfaction included:

- strong sense of community
- pride in uniforms and general student behaviour
- P & F fundraising
- liturgies and celebrations
- Year 6 leadership & buddy program
- Extra curricula options and enrichment

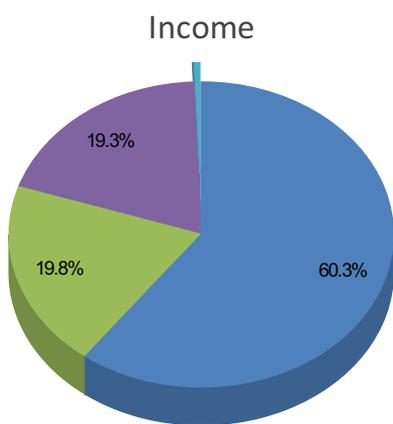
Student Satisfaction

An informal survey was conducted of upper primary students in Year 5 and 6. The students indicated high degrees of satisfaction. Most students agreed that the school helped them to understand the Catholic faith. Other areas of high satisfaction were: that teachers encouraged them to learn to the best of their ability; understanding their rights and responsibilities; pride in school; feeling safe at school; knowing who to approach if they have a problem; and that there are sporting and other activities to become involved in.

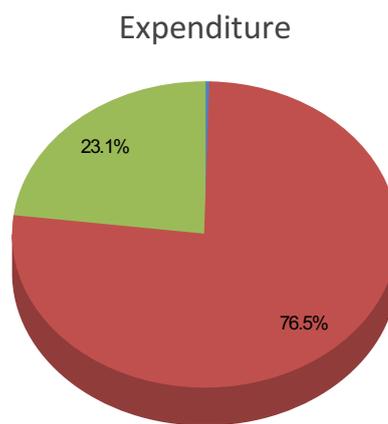
Staff Satisfaction

Through the annual staff Review and Improvement process the staff have indicated satisfaction in the following areas:

- the school has a significant commitment to an inclusive approach to needs of students.
- that the school provides appropriate and informative information to parents about student progress.
- that the school has developed strong pastoral care processes and procedures.
- Staff agree that the area still requiring additional work is around students understanding their rights and responsibilities. This area will continue to be a focus as the school expands in student numbers.



- Commonwealth Recurrent Grants (60.3%)
- Government Capital Grants (0%)
- State Recurrent Grants (19.8%)
- Fees and Private Income (19.3%)
- Other Capital Income (0.6%)



- Capital Expenditure (0.4%)
- Salaries and Related Expenses (76.5%)
- Non-Salary Expenses (23.1%)

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 ¹	\$1,215,797
Government Capital Grants ²	\$0
State Recurrent Grants ³	\$398,757
Fees and Private Income ⁴	\$389,726
Other Capital Income ⁵	\$12,412
Total Income	\$2,021,026

RECURRENT and CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	
Capital Expenditure ⁶	\$8,463
Salaries and Related Expenses ⁷	\$1,478,426
Non-Salary Expenses ⁸	\$445,693
Total Expenditure	\$1,932,582

For the 2015 year the St Columba's Primary School received \$4,334 as Interest Subsidy. Our school community is appreciative of the support it received from the NSW State Government under the Interest Subsidy Scheme

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 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:

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St Columba's Primary School

ADAMSTOWN

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