St Thomas Aquinas Primary School, Springwood
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Introduction

About the Annual School Report

St Thomas Aquinas Primary School is registered by the New South Wales Education Standards Authority, NESA, as a member of the Catholic system of schools in the Diocese of Parramatta.

The Annual School Report provides parents and the wider school community with fair, accurate and objective information about various aspects of school performance and development. The Report describes achievement of school development priorities in 2017 and gives information about the 2018 priorities.

This Report is a legislative requirement under the Schools Assistance Act, 2008 and the Education Amendment Act 2004.

The information in this Report is complemented by the school website where other school publications and newsletters can be viewed or obtained from the school.
Key Messages

Principal

I am pleased to present to you the 2017 Annual School Report for St Thomas Aquinas Primary School, Springwood. At St Thomas Aquinas Primary School we believe that a holistic education which develops the intellectual, spiritual, physical, social and emotional aspects of each child is critical in empowering students with the knowledge skills, values and attitudes that will enable all students to reach their personal goals and contribute to the betterment of society.

Through daily interactions with students, our Catholic faith is modelled and explicitly taught, and spirituality is nurtured. The staff, in partnership with families and our parish priest, is committed to providing a school where children feel happy, safe, cared for, and are always actively engaged in their learning.

In 2017 our school focused on the implementation of our learning goals:
- formation: for all students to improve their knowledge of the church’s prayer traditions
- numeracy: for all students to improve their application of problem-solving skills
- literacy: for all students to improve the quality of their writing

Significant initiatives that enriched the educational purpose of the school were:
- drama literacy: students in Year 3 and Year 4 benefited enormously from weekly drama lessons from a trained actor and a performance as part of the Parramatta Diocesan Creative Arts initiative known as Captivate
- band: as part of the Captivate program a concert band continued to show development and growth in numbers
- choirs: our senior and junior school choirs participated in a number of school, community, parish and diocesan events during the year
- Holy Week liturgies: students led the school in retracing the passion and resurrection of Christ
- Grandparents Day: the day encompassed a special liturgy, shared picnic, concert and open classrooms
- Italian: the continuation of this language program enabled students to develop their proficiency in Italian as well participating in culture-enriching activities

Parent

At St Thomas Aquinas Primary School, we welcome the involvement of parents, as the first educators of their children, in many aspects of school life.

There are a number of activities in which parents participated including:
- planning and assisting with the school-wide Walkathon
- other fundraising initiatives eg Mothers Day stall, Fathers Day, Sports Day barbecue
- Trivia Night
- Ice Block Day
- Movie Night
- school excursions
- sporting events - school, zone, diocesan
- school library, book club and book fair
- community tutors in the Reading Support program
- clothing pool
- social justice appeals
- parent-focused learning meetings
- Mathematics groups in classes
- performing arts initiatives
- chess club
- community morning and afternoon teas
- ongoing liaison with the home-school liaison minister

We believe education is the joint responsibility of parents, teachers and children and that by working together we can provide the best possible learning environment for students.

**Student**

The Student Representative Council (SRC) was made up of students from each class in Years 5 and 6. The representatives were nominated and elected by their class peers. Nominated students were asked to prepare a short address to their class outlining their vision and goals on their behalf. The speech was prepared at school and composed solely by the nominated students.

The work of the SRC included:
- being responsible for the daily raising and lowering of the national flag and assisting with the weekly assembly
- meeting with the assistant principal each week - opinions sought about school issues and initiatives
- working with the assistant principal and principal in presenting social skills, anti-bullying strategies, behavioural expectations and school pride at assemblies
- being responsible for meeting and greeting official visitors to our school
- being called upon, at times, to represent the school at other special events such as ANZAC Day march and wreath-laying ceremony, Springwood Foundation Day, Vietnam Veterans Day, and school tours for prospective families

The other area of student leadership was through the Mini Vinnies group which comprised students from Years 4 to 6 who proposed and enacted social justice initiatives. This group was facilitated and supported by the school's Religious Education coordinator.

The school has a proud tradition of servant leadership. All students were actively encouraged to strive to model respect, kindness, wisdom and charity to fellow students and the broader community.
Who we are

History of the school

St Thomas Aquinas Primary School, was opened in 1921 with a total school enrolment of 24 students in the old church building located on the corner of Hawkesbury Road and Macquarie Road, Springwood. By 1962, enrolment had increased to 187 students and a new school building was erected on the Hawkesbury Road frontage.

The Sisters of St Joseph taught at the school until 1976, when the first lay principal was appointed.

The first stage of the new St Thomas Aquinas Primary School was opened on its current site in 1982.

Seven new classrooms, an administration block and library were completed in 2001. A covered learning area was constructed in 2006 with funds raised by the parent body. A new multi-purpose learning and performance space (Bishop Manning Learning Centre) was completed in 2011 together with other school upgrades as part of the federal government’s Building the Education Revolution (BER) program.

Location/drawing area

The school is located on a most picturesque site with ample playing areas and views of the surrounding bush land and national park. The school is in close proximity to the parish church, pastoral centre and the neighbouring St Columba’s Catholic College.

As part of the parish of Springwood, the school draws most of its enrolments from families living within the parish area. This area includes the townships of Linden, Faulconbridge, Springwood, Winmalee, Yellow Rock, Hawkesbury Heights and Warrimoo. Additionally, some students come from the greater Blue Mountains area.
## Workforce Composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of teachers who hold teaching qualification from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of teachers who have a bachelor degree from a higher education institution within Australia or within AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lacking formal teacher qualifications</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of teachers accredited to teach Religious Education</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of teachers currently undertaking accreditation to teach Religious Education</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of non-teaching staff (includes teachers’ aides)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of teachers who are indigenous</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The average teacher attendance for 2017</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of 2017 teaching staff who were retained from 2016</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prayer, Liturgical Life and Faith Experiences

Our school community has a meaningful and vibrant liturgical and prayer life which follows the seasons and feasts of the church and celebrates significant events in the life of the school. In 2017 these included weekly parish mass attendance by various classes; Opening School Mass; Year 6 Graduation Mass; End of Year Mass; Student Representative Council induction liturgy; Reconciliation; staff prayer; daily class prayer; daily whole-school peace prayer and the Angelus; Lenten and Holy Week liturgies; Easter; Pentecost; Advent; and Christmas pageant. Additionally, we held ceremonies and prayers for current events in the world including Mission Week and Grandparents Day. Together with the parish, we provided opportunities for children to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation.

We placed great importance on the contribution of the visual and performing arts to the liturgical life of our school. This, together with the ambience, the sense of reverence and occasion, and the preparation of the children to participate in liturgies meaningfully, contributed to our communal worship. Special attention was paid to the centrality of Word and Sacrament. Live music, singing, drama, symbols, visual art works, gestures and liturgical movement were incorporated into all celebrations.

Social Justice

Our school works actively towards a variety of initiatives that strive to share faith and extend kindness and compassion for those in our community who are in need.

In 2017 these included:
- a student led Mini Vinnies group - assisted in leading social justice initiatives in the school
- school/home liaison minister (a Sister of the Good Samaritan Order) - visited homes and pastorally supported families
- school-wide focus on prayer and scripture

As part of the school’s social justice outreach the following fundraising took place, focused on supporting the work of Caritas, St Vincent de Paul and the local community:
- Mission Week
- St Vincent de Paul Christmas Hamper Appeal
- Grandparents Day
- mission work with St Columba's Catholic College students
- Project Compassion
- knitting blankets for local families

School home and parish partnerships

The school has close links with its parish. Students attended the weekly parish mass on a roster basis. Our pastor or assistant pastor visited the school to administer the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The school supported the Sacramental program of the parish in practical and spiritual ways such as praying for, and acknowledging the candidates, and providing the music for the Sacramental liturgies and masses.

The school joined with the community in hosting a Grandparents Day. Grandparents and other significant family members were welcomed to the school for a liturgy, picnic, concert and open classrooms.

The home/school liaison minister's role was most important in supporting families practically and extending hospitality to them. The home/school liaison minister (a Sister of the Good Samaritan Order) visited many homes during the year, assisting to build relationships between home and school.

Parents were involved in the pastoral and sacred life of the school in a variety of ways such as:
- attending weekly parish mass with their children
- attending and participating in the rich liturgical life of the school
- nominating students for Love One Another awards for living out the school motto
- collaborating with the school in assisting the parish Sacramental program
- charitable works for other families eg supply of meals and pastoral care
- ongoing practical support of families in need

**Religious Education**

Students and staff at St Thomas Aquinas Primary School have always had a strong sense of being part of a Catholic school and this was translated into an authentic culture of religious practice.

Students were involved in Religious Education (RE) in the classroom through the Parramatta Diocesan syllabus, *Sharing Our Story*, and the gospel message was reflected in a number of other ways, including regular parish mass attendance, Reconciliation, prayer, pastoral care programs, charitable works, religious music and art.

The school also actively supported the parish-based Sacramental program.

**Professional Learning of staff in Religious Education**

During 2017 staff undertook the following professional learning in Religious Education:
- deepened their theological understanding of Scripture through professional reading, images and dialogue with a focus on the Gospel of Matthew (Year A)
- implemented *The Three Senses* approach to student Scriptural understanding (literal, spiritual and applied)
- used a RE program template that identified common pedagogical practices, eg learning intentions and success criteria, senses of Scripture, key vocabulary, warm-up activities and assessment rubrics
- drew on a variety of strategies and resources to enhance students' scriptural understanding eg *Exploring Scripture* scripts; embodied cognition; *To Know Worship and Love* texts; *Understanding Faith* and *Liturgy Help* websites
- provided Scripture word walls and images as scaffolds for student understanding
- implemented pre, mid and post unit assessment of student Scripture knowledge to guide planning and delivery of teaching and learning activities
- incorporated a Scripture passage as one of the learning focuses in class assembly presentation
National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

Students in Year 3, Year 5, Year 7 and Year 9 across Australia participated in National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) in May 2017. The purpose of this test is to provide information to parents and teachers about the achievements of students in aspects of Literacy and Numeracy. The test provides a measure of the student’s performance against established standards and against other students in Australia. Each year the results are analysed by the school to inform teaching and learning with a view to improving student performance.

The Commonwealth Government sets minimum acceptable standards for literacy, numeracy, reading, writing, grammar, punctuation and spelling at particular ages. These are referred to as national minimum standards. Student performance in NAPLAN in our school is compared to these standards. The percentages of students achieving at or above these national minimum standards, and the percentages of students in the top three bands are reported in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAPLAN RESULTS 2017</th>
<th>% of students at or above national minimum standard</th>
<th>% of students in top three bands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar and Punctuation</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
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<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The school's NAPLAN highlights were:

Literacy Year 3:
- The percentage of students in the top three bands in literacy was 4% above the national percentage.
- The percentage of students in the top three bands in grammar and punctuation was 9% above the national percentage.
- The percentage of students in the top three bands in writing was 1% above the national percentage.
The trend in NAPLAN reading remained above the national percentage.

Literacy Year 5:
- The percentage of students in the top three bands in Literacy was 21% above the national percentage.
- The percentage of students of students in the top three bands in grammar and punctuation was 13% above the national percentage.
- The percentage of students in the top three bands in writing was 9% above the national percentage.
- The percentage of students of students in the top three bands in reading was 17% above the national percentage.

Numeracy Year 3:
- The percentage of students in the top three bands in Numeracy was 11% above the national percentage.
- Of our students, 100% were at, or above, the national minimum standards.

Numeracy Year 5:
- The percentage of students in the top three bands in Numeracy was 13% above the national percentage.
- Of our students, 98% were at, or above, the national minimum standards.

Areas for Development:

Literacy:
Data for writing, particularly in Year 3, confirmed that writing is an area where students require additional learning. Our school goal in this area is strategically focused on strategies to support this development: students improving the quality of their writing with a focus on structure, audience and vocabulary.

Numeracy:
NAPLAN data and teacher data analysis indicated that students needed to develop their ability to apply their knowledge of multiplicative thinking to tasks that required problem-solving and reasoning. Our school goal and professional learning continues to focus on these areas.

School curriculum
We believe in an educational environment which provides a rigorous, balanced and relevant curriculum focused on the unique needs of each child so that every individual is valued, nurtured, cared for and respected, while also being challenged to achieve his or her best in all aspects of learning.

Additional teaching and learning programs in place for students included:
- Italian language and culture program
- small group music lessons in conjunction with Springwood School of Music
- chess club
- school musical productions - Captivate Showcase, Drama-Literacy Showcase, Wakakirri (story/dance competition)
- transition programs (ie Kindergarten and High School Transition)
- sport (inter-school and intra-school)
- choir and musical performances
- author visits
- visits from musical and drama groups eg Musica Viva, Anti-bullying
- Premier’s Reading Challenge
- excursions
- theatre performances
- Captivate Drama and Literacy program
- Concert Band program (brass and wind instruments)

The school provided the following learning support programs for students including:
- St Thomas Aquinas Rich Support (STARS) - inclusive learning support
- Reading Recovery teachers (two trained teachers) intervention for vulnerable students in reading
- Extending Mathematical Understanding (EMU) specialist intervention teacher for vulnerable students in numeracy
- Autism Satellite Class (K6A) staffed by Autism NSW - integration and transition of students both academically and socially
- Writers Club - literacy support and extension
- School Wide Literacy Intervention program - catered for remediation and extension in literacy, with students in needs-based groups
- speech and occupational therapies where therapists visited the school
- school counsellor provided through Catholic Education, Diocese of Parramatta (CEDP)
- social skills and anti-bullying programs

Initiatives to promote respect and responsibility
The school sets high expectations regarding respectful behaviour, grooming, manners and interaction with others. Processes and expectations are set out in our Pastoral Care and Student Management policy.

We worked in partnership with parents to ensure that these expectations were met through visual reminders, explicit modelling and reinforcement.

As a result, the school developed a culture of hospitality and welcome. Through explicit articulation of expectations, our students consistently demonstrated appropriate reverence, respect and participation in a variety of settings including liturgies and assemblies.

The school used the restorative justice approach in student management which was based on taking responsibility for one’s own actions and being respectful of the rights of others, as well as restoring positive relationships.

The school participated in many civic activities including:
- ANZAC day march and wreath laying ceremony
- Springwood Vietnam Veterans Day
- Springwood Foundation Day
- Grandparents Day
- works of social justice initiated and led by Mini Vinnies
- Springwood Christmas Tree Decorating Ceremony
- Springwood Chamber of Commerce Christmas choir performance

Professional Learning
We undertook professional development to:
- deepen theological understanding of Scripture through professional reading, images and dialogue with a focus on the Gospel of Matthew (Year A);
- implement The Three Senses approach to student scriptural understanding - literal, spiritual and applied
- implement a common Religious Education programming template

Professional Learning in this area included a Professional Development Day on prayer.
Numeracy

We undertook professional development to:
- administer the Mathematical Assessment Interview (MAI) to all students
- conduct the analysis of MAI data
- administer school-based diagnostic problem solving questions
- collect student sample problem-solving tasks for analysis
- track, monitor and support students based on growth point assessment
- increase knowledge of Mathematics continuums, assessment data, data analysis and high yield strategies
- focus on common problem-solving tasks incorporating multiplicative thinking
- multiplicative thinking (Stage 3 teachers) through CEDP multiplicative thinking course
- develop questions that drive multiplicative thinking and reasoning
- understand syllabus outcomes better

Literacy

We undertook professional development to:
- ensure agreed practice across the school as to what constitutes shared, modelled and guided writing
- work with teachers to ensure that writing samples are analysed with common understanding
- deepen teacher knowledge on the elements of purpose, audience, sentence structure and vocabulary as related to the writing process
- provide specific, quality feedback and feed forward to students about ways to improve their writing
- develop a common understanding of the literacy continuum
- develop teacher use of mentor texts
- develop teacher use of 'I can' statements in classroom practice

Professional Learning in this area included the establishment of a Professional Learning Community (PLC) with two neighbouring schools. Four PLC professional learning sessions were held over the year focused on writing.
## School Improvement

### Annual school priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority 1</th>
<th>That all students would deepen their understanding of Christian Scripture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reason for priority 1</strong></td>
<td>This was in response to staff feedback, Religious Education Assessment data and reflection on the school's 2016 Religious Education (RE) goal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Steps taken to achieve priority 1** | In 2017 we:  
- deepened teacher understanding of Scripture through professional reading, images and dialogue on St. Matthew's Gospel, implementing *Three Senses* approach to engaging with Scripture (literal, inferential/spiritual and applied)  
- implemented a RE program template identifying common practices, eg learning intentions, success criteria, senses of Scripture, key vocabulary, warm-up activities, and assessment  
- implemented Scripture word walls and images as scaffolds for student understanding |
| **Status of priority 1** | Ongoing |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority 2</th>
<th>That all students would improve their problem-solving skills in numeracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reason for priority 2</strong></td>
<td>School-wide data, staff feedback and reflection, indicated that the strands of multiplication and division as they apply to problem-solving required concerted improvement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Steps taken to achieve priority 2** | We:  
- analysed 2017 MAI data  
- identified vulnerable students in multiplication and division  
- increased teacher capacity and knowledge of syllabus strategies and assessment, and rich numeracy warm ups  
- provided professional learning on problem-solving strategies and multiplicative thinking  
- implemented questioning techniques that would improve student thinking, reasoning and problem-solving skills  
- monitored and tracked vulnerable students using growth points and used case management to support them |
<p>| <strong>Status of priority 2</strong> | Ongoing |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority 3</th>
<th>That all students would improve the quality of their writing with a focus on text cohesion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reason for priority 3</td>
<td>Although teacher assessment and evaluation of student writing showed improvement, the 2016 NAPLAN data showed that, in order to increase the percentage of students in the top three bands, students required additional learning, particularly in the area of text cohesion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steps taken to achieve priority 3</td>
<td>We focused on:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- daily student practice of modelled, shared, guided and independent writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- feedback and forward to improve student writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- implementing the use of 'I Can' statements to self-assess writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- using the English Syllabus to direct learning and teaching in text cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- developing further understanding of the clusters in the Department of Education and Communities (DEC) literacy continuum, aspects of writing and tracking student progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- collecting and analysing student writing samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status of priority 3</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Projected school priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority 1</th>
<th>All students will use the three senses of Scripture model to deepen their understanding of Christian Scripture, as measured by Kindergarten to Year 6 (K-6) classroom assessment and Religious Literacy Assessment (RLA) data - engaging with Scripture texts at literal, spiritual and applied levels.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reason for Priority 1</strong></td>
<td>This is the continuation of the Religious Education focus commenced in 2017. Staff feedback and student assessment data indicates this focus has emerging benefits for both teacher and student knowledge. The Religious Education teaching and learning strategies developed through common 2017 school emphasis will be consolidated and extended with the scaffold of the <em>Three Senses</em> of Scripture.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Steps to be taken to achieve Priority 1** | We will:  
- develop classroom scaffolds to support Scripture learning  
- plan and guide professional learning meetings to consolidate school practice of interpreting Scripture at literal, spiritual and applied levels  
- develop assessment rubrics  
- model the use of the *Three Senses* questions at staff prayer  
- use Scripture assessment data to inform planning  
- facilitate the use of home Scripture kits for families to use  
- use pre, mid, and post assessments to guide teaching |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority 2</th>
<th>All students will improve the quality of their writing with a focus on text cohesion and spelling as measured by the English Syllabus outcomes, DEC literacy continuum (aspects of writing), classroom assessments and a comparison of 2017/2018 NAPLAN data.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reason for Priority 2</strong></td>
<td>Although teacher assessment and evaluation of student writing in relation to syllabus expectations shows improvement, the 2017 NAPLAN data showed that, in order to increase the percentage of students in the top three bands, students require additional learning, particularly in the areas of text cohesion and spelling.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Steps to be taken to achieve Priority 2** | These will focus on:  
- students being engaged in daily modelled, shared, guided and independent writing  
- students using the the 'I Can' statements to develop self-assessment  
- quality feedback and feed forward to students about ways they can improve their writing  
- opportunities for students to deconstruct writing, including mentor texts, shared and student texts  
- students spelling words considering their etymology, morphology, phonology and orthography  
- collecting and analysing student writing samples |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority 3</th>
<th>For all students to improve in problem solving and to use efficient reasoning skills, as well as to make progress of a minimum of one growth point in multiplication and division</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reason for Priority 3</td>
<td>Data gathered on instructional walks, staff feedback as well as quantitative student data indicates that students have difficulty in being able to express their reasoning skills when using multiplicative and problem-solving strategies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Steps to be taken to achieve Priority 3                                  | Focus will be on:  
  ■ class teachers administering the Mathematical Assessment Interview (MAI) at the beginning of term 1  
  ■ teachers analysing and evaluating MAI data and using findings to inform learning and teaching  
  ■ teachers identifying vulnerable students  
  ■ teachers participating in CEDP facilitated multiplicative thinking modules to increase their pedagogical understanding and skills  
  ■ increasing teacher capacity in Syllabus knowledge and assessment  
  ■ reviewing and analysing data walls and NAPLAN results                   |
Community Satisfaction

Parent satisfaction
Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta annually engages an external organisation (Insight SRC) to conduct the Quality Catholic Schooling (QCS) Survey to provide feedback from students, staff and parents.

The QCS survey data from 2017 provided the following areas of strength. Parents were positive about:
- teachers and leadership approachability
- school focus on learning
- Catholic culture and opportunities for the expression of Catholic culture
- liturgical life of the school
- social justice initiatives
- pastoral care
- student connectedness to the school
- extra-curricula opportunities
- community outreach and involvement
- student safety

Areas for development and strategies to achieve these included:
- greater parental participation through the formation of a School Fundraising and Community Events Team
- promoting greater parental understanding of educational programs/strategies through regular parent learning sessions.

Student satisfaction
In 2017 every student in Years 3 to 6 was provided the opportunity to participate in the QCS survey. This instrument provided the opportunity to acquire feedback from all students in Stage 2 and 3 about their school experience.

The QCS student survey data provided the following areas of strength and areas for development.

Strengths included:
- teacher empathy and relationships
- student safety
- student morale
- purposeful teaching
- connectedness to school

Areas for development and strategies to achieve these:
- jointly constructed specific feedback between teachers and students about their learning
- students being actively encouraged to identify their achievements and successes and next steps in their learning, using descriptive feedback, learning intentions and success criteria

Teacher satisfaction
Areas of strength identified through the QCS Survey by teachers included:
- ongoing improvement in the professional learning domain
- supportive school leadership
- school morale and pastoral care
- Catholic culture
- well established team work
- focus on improvement and growth

Areas for development and strategies to achieve these:
- ongoing focus on teacher learning and collaborative processes
- development of processes to promote peer-to-peer feedback
- development of cross-stage teams in literacy, numeracy and Religious Education to build teacher capacity and ownership in driving the learning agenda
Enrolment Policy

St Thomas Aquinas Primary School follows the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta (CEDP) *Enrolment Policy and Procedures*. This document can be obtained from the school office or can be accessed on the CEDP website [http://www.parra.catholic.edu.au/policy-central](http://www.parra.catholic.edu.au/policy-central)

**Current and previous years’ student enrolment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>590</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The enrolment trend for the school has remained reasonably stable from 2016 to 2017 with a total enrolment of 590 students. In addition the school also hosts an autism satellite class comprising 12 students. Therefore the total enrolment at the school is 602 students.

The school is organised in most instances into three streams per grade. However the 2017 Year 6 group comprised 100 students organised into four classes. This cohort has grown from three stream to four stream accruing student enrolments over a number of years.

**Student attendance rates**

The table below shows the percentage of student attendance by Year level and school average.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>Attendance Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Average</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Characteristics of the student body**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language background other than English (LBOTE)</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with disabilities (SWD)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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 schooling age is 6-17. Parents and guardians are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, explaining the absences of their children in writing within several days to the school, and taking measures to resolve attendance issues involving their children. School staff as part of their duty of care, monitor part or whole day absences.

They maintain accurate records of students’ attendance, follow up unexplained absences.
through written and verbal communication, implement programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise, and provide clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance. The principal or their delegate, may grant permission for late arrival or early departure from school, leave or exemption from attendance only in individual cases, on written request from parents and guardians.

The principal/delegate will undertake all reasonable measures to contact parents promptly if an unexplained absence occurs. If truancy is suspected, the principal will contact the parents/guardians to ascertain the reason for the absence. If a satisfactory response is not received, the matter will be referred to the relevant staff at the Catholic Education Office, Diocese of Parramatta who will follow up unexplained absences as per legislative requirements.
Student wellbeing

Student welfare, discipline and anti-bullying policies and pastoral care

A copy of the Pastoral Care and Student Management policy (revised 2016) is available in hard copy from the school office and from the school website. The policy includes details pertaining to Student Welfare and Procedural Fairness. The Discipline policy remained unchanged during this reporting period.

At St Thomas Aquinas Primary School, we believe that the idea of partnership is integral to fostering growth amongst members of the school community. It is about developing empathetic, reciprocal relationships which encourage and support the realisation of gifts within each person and a commitment to the wellbeing of the school community.

Procedural fairness underpinned all issues that dealt with the management of students.

Procedural fairness was based on the following two elements:

1. The right of each person to be heard, which included:
   - the right to know the issue/complaint/allegation related to a specific matter and any other information which would be taken into account in considering the matter
   - the right to know the process in which the matter would be considered
   - the right to have reasonable opportunity to respond to the issue/complaint/allegation
   - the right to know the reasons in support of any decision made

2. The right of a person to an impartial decision, which included:
   - the right to impartiality in the investigation and decision making process
   - the right to absence of bias in the decision maker

Complaints and grievances policy

The school followed formal protocols and procedures in place to address complaints and grievances in a timely and professional manner.

These protocols and procedures are in line with the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta (CEDP), Compliant Handling policy (revised 2015). A copy of the policy is available on the CEDP website at: http://www.parra.catholic.edu.au/policy-central

There were no changes to the policy in 2017.
Section Eleven: Financial Statement

**Income**
- Commonwealth (64%)
- Capital (0%)
- State (19.2%)
- Fees (15.4%)
- Other (1.4%)

**Expenditure**
- Capital (1%)
- Salary (78.1%)
- Non-Salary (20.9%)

### RECURRENT and CAPITAL INCOME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth Recurrent Grants</td>
<td>$4,364,787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Capital Grants</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Recurrent Grants</td>
<td>$1,311,837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fees and Private Income</td>
<td>$1,054,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Capital Income</td>
<td>$93,985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Income</td>
<td>$6,825,019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### RECURRENT and CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capital Expenditure</td>
<td>$63,793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaries and Related Expenses</td>
<td>$4,918,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Salary Expenses</td>
<td>$1,314,259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenditure</td>
<td>$6,296,272</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Commonwealth** relates to Commonwealth Recurrent Grants including per capita funding and special purpose grants.
2. **Capital** relates to Government Capital Grants.
3. **State** relates to State Recurrent Grants including per capita funding, interest subsidy and special purpose grants.
4. **Fees** relates to diocesan and school based fees, excursions and other private income from parents.
5. **Other** refers to Other Capital Income including drawdowns from the Diocesan School Building Fund to fund Capital Expenditure.
6. **Capital** refers to Capital Expenditure including School Buildings, Furniture and Equipment.
7. **Salaries** refers to the total of all Salaries, allowances and related expenses such as superannuation, workers compensation and leave.
8. **Non-Salary** refers to all other Non-Salary Recurrent Expenses.