

St. Gabriel's Primary School Bexley

Annual School Report to the Community

2010



School Contact Details:

50 – 52 Abercorn Street Bexley 2207

info@stgbexley.catholic.edu.au

www.stgbexley.catholic.edu.au

(02) 9502 1932

CONTENTS	Page
About This Report	1
Message From Key School Bodies	2
School Features	3
Catholic Life And Religious Education	3
School Curriculum	4
Student Performance In Tests	5
Professional Learning And Teacher Standards	7
Teacher Attendance And Retention	7
Student Attendance	8
School Policies	8
School Determined Improvement Targets	10
Initiatives Promoting Respect And Responsibility	10
Parent, Teacher And Student Satisfaction	11
Financial Statement	12

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

AIP: Annual Improvement Plan

BER: Building Education Revolution

BOS: Board of Studies

CEO: Catholic Education Office

ESL: English Second Language

HSIE: Human Society and its Environment

ICT: Information and Communication Technologies

LBOTE: Language Background Other Than English

LFTT: Language Features of Text Types

KLA: Key Learning Area

NAPLAN: National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy

SIP: Strategic Improvement Plan

SMART: School Measurement Assessment and Reporting Toolkit

SRC: Student Representative Council

ABOUT THIS REPORT

St. Gabriel's Primary School, Bexley is registered by the Board of Studies, NSW, and managed by the Catholic Education Office (CEO), Sydney, the 'approved authority' for the Registration System formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act 1990.

The *Annual School Report to the Community* for this year provides the community with fair, reliable and objective information about school performance measures and policies, as determined by the Minister for Education.

The *Report* also outlines information about initiatives and developments of major interest and importance to the community during the year and the achievements arising from the implementation of the school's Annual Improvement Plan (AIP).

Accordingly, the *Report* demonstrates accountability to regulatory bodies, the school community and the CEO, Sydney. This *Report* has been approved by the CEO, Sydney in consultation with the Regional Consultant who monitors that the school has appropriate processes in place to ensure compliance with all NSW Board of Studies requirements for Registration and Accreditation.

This *Report* complements and is supplementary to school newsletters and other regular communications. The *Report* will be available on the school's website by 30 June 2011 following its submission to the Board of Studies (BOS).

The contents of this *Report* will be discussed at the St. Gabriel's Advisory Council. Further information about the school or this *Report* may be obtained by contacting the school on (02) 95021932 or by visiting the website at www.stgbexley.catholic.edu.au.

PRINCIPAL: Mr. Steve Darcy
DATE: December 2010

MESSAGE FROM KEY SCHOOL BODIES

Principal's Message

This annual report provides the school with an opportunity to outline the achievements and initiatives that have occurred during the 2010 school year. With our school motto of 'Proclaim the Word of God', St. Gabriel's Primary School, Bexley continues to provide an authentic Catholic education to the children and their families.

We have much to be proud of, as the partnership between school, home, parish and the wider community continues to strengthen. I acknowledge the ongoing support and dedicated effort of our Parish Priest, the staff and parents, to enhance learning opportunities for the students within our community.

School Advisory Council Message

St. Gabriel's is a school that is rich in community spirit that actively engages in the school motto of proclaiming the Word of God. The school provides a warm and inviting environment for all parents and interested parishioners and general community members. The recent 70th Anniversary of the parish of St. Gabriel's was a testament to this with a wonderful celebration enjoyed by the school and parish community.

In 2010, the parents have continued to support the school through attending School / Parish Masses, weekly class prayer, sports carnivals (school, cluster and regional level), classroom helpers and weekly assemblies and various fund raising efforts. Without the ongoing support of the parents, the strong sense of community spirit would not be present.

The school has undergone a physical transformation in 2010 with the completion of the building of the new school hall. What a fantastic facility St. Gabriel's now has. In the years to come, this hall will be used to its maximum potential. St. Gabriel's is very appreciative to have this facility built as part of the Australian Government's, Building the Education Revolution (BER) program.

On behalf of the parent body of St. Gabriel's, I offer a sincere thank you to Mr Darcy and the teaching staff who provide quality education and inspiration to all the children at the school. Thank you for all your dedication and effort, it is truly appreciated.

SCHOOL FEATURES

St. Gabriel's Bexley is a Catholic systemic co-educational school, catering for boys and girls from Kindergarten to Year 6. The school has a current enrolment of two hundred and five students. This is an increase from the one hundred and eighty-four students who were enrolled in 2006.

Students attending this school come from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities. One hundred and twenty-one of our students are males and eighty-four are female. One hundred and twenty-five of our students are classified as having a language background other than English (LBOTE).

The school employs seventeen staff comprising of thirteen teachers and four non-teaching staff, the latter being employed in a variety of capacities including teacher's aides and office staff.

St Gabriel's was established in 1939 by the Sisters of Charity. From 1946 the Sisters of St Joseph worked in the school until 1983, when the first lay principal was appointed. Today the school is administered by the Catholic Education Office, Sydney (CEO) on behalf of the Archdiocese of Sydney. Extensions to the school, locally funded with a grant of \$150 000 provided by the CEO and costing \$900 000, were blessed and opened by Cardinal Edward Clancy in 1999. In 2008 the library was refurbished to include a technology centre including thirty desktop computers. A new multi-purpose school hall and covered outdoor learning area have been completed at a cost of around 1.3 million dollars during 2010.

CATHOLIC LIFE AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

St. Gabriel's follows the Archdiocesan Religious Education Curriculum and uses the student textbooks, *To Know, Worship and Love*, as authorised by the Archbishop of Sydney, George Cardinal Pell.

Some of the highlights of 2010 have included:

- The celebration of the Sacramental programs for Penance, Eucharist and Confirmation which involved the family, parish and school communities.
- Formulating an updated school Mission and Vision statement based on the charism of the founding orders and reflecting the Gospel values.
- The continued involvement of our students and their families in supporting the St. Vincent de Paul Night Patrol organisation as well as other various social justice initiatives.
- Educating students to respect the human dignity of all people by providing opportunities to engage with representatives of various charitable organisations. (for example St. Vincent de Paul, Greenwood Cottage.)

- The celebration of parish / school masses to strengthen the relationships within the parish community.
- Proclaiming the Word of God through liturgical celebrations that are inclusive and creative.
- School liturgies to celebrate important events and the use of Thursday morning prayer, where staff, students and parents are given the opportunity to lead the community in a celebration of our Catholic faith.
- Ensuring the newly developed Strategic Improvement Plan portrays St. Gabriel's Primary School, Bexley as a distinctly Catholic community.
- Appropriately involving children of other Christian traditions in both school and parish based celebrations.

Students in Year 6 sat the Archdiocesan Religious Education Test in June this year. The test consisted of fifty multiple choice questions. Results of this test are analysed by staff and are used to inform teaching and learning from Kindergarten to Year 6. The 2010 Archdiocesan average for the test was 82%, with the school average being 83%. The school is particularly pleased that over 33% of our students were awarded either a High Distinction or Distinction which continues the school's excellent performance in external assessments.

SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The school provides an educational program based on, and taught in accordance with the Board of Studies syllabuses for Primary Education. The Key Learning Areas (KLAs) are English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Human Society and its Environment, Creative Arts and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education. In addition, the school implements the curriculum requirements of the Catholic Education Office, Sydney. The curriculum, teaching and learning are informed by the priorities, goals and indicators outlined in the *Sydney Catholic Schools 'Towards 2010' Strategic Leadership and Management Plan*, in particular: *Key Area 2* (Students and their Learning) and *Key Area 3* (Pedagogy). Staff members at the school are committed to continuous improvement of teaching and learning in all facets of the school curriculum.

Some of the initiatives that are making a real difference to the student's learning include:

- Developing enrichment programs for students identified as achieving at a high level.
- Exploring the use of student self-assessment to allow them to reflect on their learnings and to contribute to decisions about the directions of their future learnings.
- Providing student learning outcomes prior to learning units and assessment tasks.
- Creating a Strategic Improvement Plan (2011 - 2014) where the Mission, Vision and intended key improvements are recorded.

- Working with CEO Advisers, and stage partners, to plan, implement and evaluate activities designed to meet the diverse needs of students in various KLA's.
- Establishing targeted intervention programs that are designed to assist students achieve their personal best academic results.
- Reviewing and then implementing a school based approach to the teaching of Spelling, including a scope and sequence from Kindergarten to Year 6.
- Continuing the 'Assessment Project In Numeracy and Religious Education' where Advisers from the Eastern Region of the CEO worked with staff to deepen their understanding of how children can be challenged to produce their best results in these areas of the curriculum.
- Continuing the Reading Recovery program, and the whole school approach to literacy with a focus on the Language Features of Text Types project (LFTT) introduced in 2008.
- Utilizing specialist support programs in Special Education and English as a Second Language (ESL).
- Using Primary Investigations Units in Science and Technology.
- Utilizing the Interactive Whiteboards that are installed in each of the classrooms and the use of the Technology Centre and classroom computers to improve the knowledge and skills of students from Kindergarten to Year 6.
- Acquiring a variety of multi-media resources to support students' active participation in their own learning.
- Using classroom reward systems and whole-school incentives to build a positive school climate where students understand that everyone has the right to learn.
- Continuing various social programs e.g. Peer Support, K to 6 buddies, to enable all students to feel happy and safe in their learning environment.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN TESTS

National Assessment Program in Literacy and Numeracy

Students in Years 3 and Year 5 sat the *National Assessment Program in Literacy and Numeracy* (NAPLAN) in May this year. 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 table provided shows 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.

Further information regarding school performance in NAPLAN against State and National trends has been provided in the school newsletter dated 19 October 2010 and is available from the school administration office. Additional information can also be accessed from the MySchool website www.myschool.edu.au.

NAPLAN results 2010 Year 3	% of students in the top 2 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
	School ¹	All schools ²	School ¹	All schools ²
Reading	74%	44%	0%	14%
Writing	69%	47%	0%	8%
Spelling	65%	39%	4%	17%
Grammar & Punctuation	69%	47%	2%	15%
Numeracy	92%	32%	7%	15%

¹ School Measurement Assessment and Reporting Toolkit (SMART)
² MCEECDYA National report www.naplan.edu.au

NAPLAN results 2010 Year 5	% of students in the top 2 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
	School ¹	All schools ²	School ¹	All schools ²
Reading	58%	29%	0%	21%
Writing	64%	24%	0%	16%
Spelling	60%	28%	4%	19%
Grammar & Punctuation	79%	35%	0%	17%
Numeracy	53%	26%	0%	18%

¹ School Measurement Assessment and Reporting Toolkit (SMART)
² MCEECDYA National report www.naplan.edu.au

The results show that our students have performed extremely well in 2010 with over 30% of our students in Year 3 and Year 5 achieving the top band in all areas of Numeracy, and over 50% of our students achieving the top two bands in all areas. A number of initiatives have impacted on these results including the implementation of a range of teaching strategies designed to challenge the students' understanding of Literacy and Numeracy. The professional development of staff working with advisers from the Catholic Education Office have enabled them to better differentiate the learning to address the needs of individual students. This, with our targeted intervention program, has assisted the students achieve their personal best in both internal and external assessments.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND TEACHER STANDARDS

Professional learning

All teachers have been involved in professional development activities during the year. These activities are designed to develop the skills and understandings of staff to improve student outcomes. Professional development can take many forms including whole school staff days, subject specific inservices, meetings and conferences.

The school held six whole staff days in 2010. The content of these days was as follows: Curriculum Development (Term 1), Development of a new school Strategic Improvement Plan (Term 2), Staff Spirituality (Term 3) and Curriculum Development and Differentiation of the curriculum (Term 4). Staff meetings are held each week.

Teacher Standards

The following table sets out the number of teachers on the school staff who fall into each of the three categories determined by the Board of Studies:

Teacher Qualifications	Number of Teachers
1. Those having formal qualifications from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	13
2. Those having graduate qualifications but not a formal teaching qualification from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	0
3. Those not having qualifications described in 1 or 2 above but having relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate relevant knowledge.	0

TEACHER ATTENDANCE AND RETENTION

The average teacher attendance rate during 2010 was 98%. This figure does not include teachers on planned leave. The teacher retention rate from 2009 to 2010 was 93%.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

The average student attendance rate for the school during 2010 was 95.3%. School attendance rates disaggregated by Year group are shown in the following table.

Attendance rates by Year group	
Kindergarten	91%
Year 1	97%
Year 2	97%
Year 3	95%
Year 4	97%
Year 5	97%
Year 6	97%

School attendance continues to be high. Prolonged absences can occur when families travel overseas and during Term 2 and Term 3 due to winter illnesses. Parents are encouraged to arrange medical and other necessary appointments outside school hours. A note explaining any absence is requested and any unexplained absences are followed up by the classroom teacher.

SCHOOL POLICIES

Enrolment Policy

The school follows the Archdiocesan Enrolment Policy. The policy has been developed in the context of government and system requirements. Children from all families who are prepared to support Catholic ideals and principles may be considered eligible for enrolment. Priority for enrolment is given in a specified order as outlined in the full policy document, however special consideration may be given to individual cases. All parents are provided with an enrolment package that includes CEO and school policy statements. Total fees are made up of the Archdiocesan tuition fee, the parish school levy and local fees and charges. A pastoral approach is adopted for parents experiencing genuine difficulty with the payment of fees.

Information about enrolling in a school within the Archdiocese of Sydney can be accessed via the link [CEO public website](#). The full text of the Archdiocesan Enrolment Policy may be accessed from the school administration office.

Student Welfare Policy

The Student Welfare Policy is based on the Archdiocesan Pastoral Care document *Pastoral Care Guidelines for Catholic Schools (2003)* which can be accessed from the [CEO public website](#). In this document, the dimensions and features of Pastoral Care are described, as well as approaches to policy formulation, review and implementation. This document is the key reference point for the school's Pastoral Care Policy. Related documents include: *Countering Harassment of Different Kinds*, *Dealing with Illegal Substances in Schools*, *Dealing with Prohibited Weapons in Schools*,

Strategies for Dealing with Cyberbullying, Disability Standards 2005, Management of Students with Challenging Behaviours: Guidelines for Primary/Secondary Schools (2007).

The school's own Student Welfare Policy was reviewed and rewritten during 2008 to include "Classroom Expectations and Classroom Consequences" and "Playground Expectations and Playground Consequences".

These changes were reviewed and discussed by staff, parents (School Advisory Council and Class Parent Association) and students before being implemented. This is now an integral part of our school's pastoral care program.

The full text of the school's Pastoral Care Policy may be accessed via the school administration office.

Discipline Policy

The school bases its Discipline policy and procedures on the document *Pastoral Care of Students in Catholic Schools (2003)*. This policy, along with the school's own Pastoral Care Policy and Student Welfare Policy ensures that discipline is based on procedural fairness and is discussed with students on a regular basis. Information on the policy is also included in regular school newsletters. Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited in this school. The school does not sanction administration of corporal punishment by school persons and non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline in the school. The full text of the Student Discipline Policy may be accessed at the school administration office.

Complaints and Grievances Resolution Policy

The school adopts the Archdiocesan *Guidelines for Resolving Concerns and Complaints at Sydney Systemic Catholic Schools (May 2007)*, available on the [CEO public website](#) in the development of its school policy. The scope of the guidelines encompass children's learning, behaviour and welfare, school organisation and management, and student health and safety issues.

The school policy is based on procedural fairness and recognises that parents and caregivers must have access to processes that allow them to resolve concerns in a supportive and conciliatory environment. Any concerns raised are responded to promptly and fairly and confidentiality is always maintained. Pathways for raising concerns are set out in the information brochure available from school administration office.

The full text of the school policy is available from the school administration office.

SCHOOL DETERMINED IMPROVEMENT TARGETS

Each year, the school develops an Annual Improvement Plan indicating the intended key improvements for student learning outcomes. The plan is drawn from the school's Strategic Management Plan and informed by the indicators of effectiveness for Sydney Catholic Schools as specified in the key CEO document *How Effective is Our Catholic School?*. The school engages in an annual evidence-based evaluation of its effectiveness against these external standards in collaboration with the school's Regional Consultant.

In 2010, St. Gabriel's developed a Strategic Improvement Plan (2011 – 2014) which was designed to engage our community in revitalising our Mission as a Catholic school, creating a shared Vision and identifying some key improvements for the next three to five years. We achieved this by utilizing a staff development day and various staff meetings to recognise past achievements and identify areas that the school could become even more effective in. Parents were also asked, through information evenings and surveys, to provide their thoughts and ideas on what the school was doing well and what we could work on in the future. The senior students were also given an opportunity to contribute their thoughts. This plan will be launched in 2011 and, together with the recommendations from the 2009 'Cyclic Review Of Our School's Learning Improvement Journey', will provide direction for the School Executive.

In 2010 the school has continued to utilize the expertise of Advisers from the CEO to strengthen our pedagogical practice and ensure we continue to meet the individual needs of the students in our care. The success of our Year 3 and Year 5 students in the NAPLAN tests would indicate that real progress is being made. In particular, the school's improved ability to ensure our top students are achieving the highest band possible will continue to be a focus in 2011.

INITIATIVES PROMOTING RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

During 2010 the students have been involved in a number of programs and initiatives to promote respect and responsibility. Some students are active in a school leadership program which includes a Student Representative Council, School Captains, Sports Captains as well as Year 6 buddies and Peer Support.

Students have been actively involved in searching for the qualities of respect, caring and compassion within the student body by the Student Representative Council (SRC) awarding a fortnightly SRC Citizenship Award. As well as this the SRC coordinated a variety of social awareness initiatives including running Jump Rope for Heart.

St Gabriel's community in 2010 has been actively promoting the principles of social justice. The school has regularly supported the St Vincent de Paul Society through the collection of food items for Night Patrol as well as fundraising supporting the Christmas and Winter appeals. Other Catholic agencies including Caritas were supported through programs such as Project Compassion.

Across the whole school there has been a renewed focus on students taking responsibility for their own actions and the rights of others. Students have become more familiar with the class and school rules. Selected classes have participated in a program to support positive participation in their school and class communities. Each week also a Class of the Week trophy has been awarded to support this positive behaviour.

PARENT, TEACHER AND STUDENT SATISFACTION

The development of a new Strategic Improvement Plan gave the school an opportunity to gather the opinions of staff, parents and students. Some of the responses, gathered from meetings and surveys, included:

- Children feel secure and happy.
- Good and open communication between parents and school.
- Technology is very strong.
- There is excellent behaviour of students built on respect.
- St. Gabriel's is a welcoming community who provide extra support for children who need it.
- There is a zero tolerance to bullying.
- I believe there is strong unity and a nurturing spirit at St. Gabriel's. Great to see.
- Teachers are great and very approachable.
- We feel the children get a good balance of Sport, Religion and opportunities for extra-curricular activities.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Catholic schools are accountable for all monies received. Each year, the CEO, Sydney submits to the Federal Government a financial statement on behalf of the 147 parish primary and regional secondary schools. This statement details the income and expenditure of each school and for the Archdiocesan system of schools. In addition, the financial accounts for each school and for the CEO, Sydney are audited annually.

A summary of the income and expenditure reported to the Federal Government for 2010 is as follows:

INCOME	\$million	EXPENDITURE	\$million
Parents' Contributions 1	\$119.4	Education and School Support	\$130.3
Federal Government 2	\$555.0	Total Salary Costs	\$500.4
State Government 2	\$132.4	Capital Expenditure	\$189.7
Government Targeted Grants	\$27.9	Surplus	\$29.6
Interest and Other	\$15.3		
Total Income	\$850.0	Total Expenditure	\$850.0

Notes

1. Parents' contributions include Archdiocesan tuition fees of \$54.6 million, School Charges & Building Levy and P&F contributions of \$ 64.8 million.
2. Income from Federal and State recurrent government grants is received by the Catholic Education Office on behalf of the schools. Staff Salaries are paid from this income.

Parents' contributions to our school as reported in the school's annual Financial Questionnaire for 2010 was:

Archdiocesan Tuition Fees received	\$141,349
School Based Fees	\$104,115
Other Income (eg. Parents & Friends, Trading & Building Levy)	\$65,310
Total	\$310,774