



# OUR LADY OF MERCY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

**2011 ANNUAL SCHOOL  
COMMUNITY REPORT**

## OUR LADY OF MERCY CATHOLIC SCHOOL ANNUAL COMMUNITY REPORT 2011

### SCHOOL PROFILE

Our Lady of Mercy School is founded in the Catholic Christian tradition. The school is in the Meander Valley Parish which serves both Westbury, Deloraine and surrounding areas and situated adjacent to the Holy Redeemer Church in Deloraine.

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School aims to provide an education which fosters the spiritual, academic, social, emotional and physical development of its students through a balanced curriculum.

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School is committed to nurturing the Faith and encouraging each person's relationship with God, through Jesus Christ. We value a Christian way of living that promotes a commitment to care, service and respect for justice and compassion within our school community and in society in general. We strive to provide the best possible learning environment.

We value excellence in the pursuit of all aspects of school life. We encourage all individuals to achieve their potential. We value a strong sense of community and encourage full involvement of parents, students and staff in the life of the school.

We value each child's uniqueness and welcome his/her particular and special abilities and needs.

Our Lady of Mercy School was established by the Sisters of Mercy in February, 1895.

The Sisters taught both boys and girls from infant to secondary classes and also took in girl boarders. In 1971 the secondary section was closed and the boarding school closed in 1972.

The first lay principal was appointed in 1996. The school is now staffed entirely by lay people.

The school's motto, 'The Lord is my Light', is reflected in Liturgy, assemblies, gatherings and is central in all planning.

In 2009, with the announcement of the Australian Government's Building Education Revolution significant time, energy and resources were devoted to organising and developing a two stage capital development plan for the school. Stage One of the planned capital works included a community hall alongside a state of the art early learning centre, basketball/netball/tennis court and a playground. This stage was majorly completed at the finish of the 2010 school year. Stage Two was completed in 2011 and included a major refurbishment of the now heritage section of the school, a covered walk way, resurfacing an undercover area and an attractive refurbishment to part of the adventure playground in the junior school playground.

The maintenance schedule for the school was adjusted to progress with minor items. More significant maintenance items, wherever possible, were aligned to building programs so as to maximise funding.

The school today tastefully blends ultra-modern facilities and refurbished heritage sections. Complementing the buildings are well-maintained spacious grounds, two adventure playground areas and a full-sized netball/basketball/tennis court.

The School Board works in collaboration with the Principal in the planning for, and bringing to reality, improvements in all areas of function at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School. The Board also oversees the responsible supervision of school resources and sees that the school meets its governmental, financial, industrial and legal obligations.

Parents are actively involved in many ways, especially through classroom help. We have a very committed Parents and Friends Association that is linked with others across the State.

## CATHOLIC LIFE AND MISSION

### **Liturgy and Prayer:**

Regardless of religious background, all children are welcomed at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School. We celebrate being a community of Faith where values for living have, as their root, the Gospel values.

Our Catholic identity and ethos are integral to all areas and function of the life of the school.

The learning offered at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School is an invitation for each student to develop to his/her full potential as a person. The education program is delivered in a faith context and is therefore an invitation to a relationship with God.

The school's Catholic identity is expressed in various ways: through class and whole school prayer, liturgical celebrations, religious symbols, the Religious Education Program, community service and the manifestation of Gospel values in the day-to-day happenings and interactions of the school community.

### **Prayer, Liturgy and Celebration**

We began our school year with an Opening School Mass attended by students, parents and parishioners. We gathered again for Ash

Wednesday and Mercy Day. Weekly assemblies began with a prayer. The principal attended the Parish Pastoral Council meetings, giving an update on school events.

Each school day began with an assembly of all classes and staff, where we pray our school prayer (composed out of the Mercy tradition), acknowledge birthdays and share notices. Each class has an established sacred space and prayer is an integral part of the day in each class.

In 2011, the school continued to provide a variety of experiences to foster the students' spiritual and faith formation. Each term, Kindergarten to Grade Six classes took turns to celebrate a grade liturgy. Kindergarten to Grade Two students engaged in prayer liturgies in the Church and Parish Hall, with Grade Three to Six students attending parish masses. This structure was in consultation with Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Parish, and in particular, Father Terry Yard who regularly leads many of the liturgies. Advent, Lent, Easter, Holy Week along with significant events such as Mother's and Father's Days were liturgically celebrated with strong attendance by family and friends.

Parents and friends were invited to join their children in all the liturgical celebrations.

### **Religious Education Curriculum:**

Religious Education is the foundation of our school and is an integral part of our Curriculum.

The formal Religious Education Program is drawn from the (2005) Curriculum Framework for Religious Education, 'Good News for Living'. Under the guidance Miss Errin McDonough, Religious Education Co-ordinator, and Religious Education Consultants from the Catholic Education Office, our teachers implemented the program with a high level of success during 2011.

### **Spirituality:**

Staff support each other on their faith journey through prayer and reflection at the beginning of staff meetings and on scheduled Spirituality Days.

The MJR (Making Jesus Real) programme is gradually being integrated into life at the school and students and staff are able to draw on it to reinforce the development of values and spirituality in the classroom and playground settings. This program, specifically offered to Grade 6 students, is overseen by Peter Mitchell and is designed to promote Christian leadership and to foster a relationship with Jesus that is real to the students and applicable to their daily lives.

### **The School in the Life of the Parish and Diocese:**

Led by Fr Terry Yard and Sister Maria Goretti, the Parish has responsibility in candidate preparation for the Sacramental Program. The school continued in its role as support for both Parish and parents in preparing children for the reception of the sacraments of First Eucharist, Confirmation and First Reconciliation. The Parish worked with the school in identifying students eligible to receive sacraments and Sister Maria Goretti worked with parents/guardians in preparing a number of our students for the Sacraments. Under revised Archdiocesan guidelines, parents and guardians take greater responsibility in their children's sacramental preparation. This is a shift from a school-based sacramental preparation.

Primary grades prepared and attended the weekly Wednesday Parish Mass.

### **Community Participation and Christian Outreach:**

Our students were actively involved in community awareness activities. Classes were rostered to visit Kanangra, the Aged Care home located next to Our Lady of Mercy. Both the Chamber Choir and School Choir visited Kanangra.

Students and their families donated to 'The Giving Tree' and to Deloraine House. Students also played an important role in the Deloraine Carols by Candlelight.

### **Parent Participation:**

Parents were invited to an Information Session, student goal setting meetings were held by each class teacher at the beginning of the year and Parent/Teacher Evenings in early second term. The format of the Information Session included a talk by the Principal. Parents then met with class teachers where details were provided for the management of each class, homework and communication expectations.

The weekly newsletter contains items of general information, educational articles, a diary of upcoming events, a report from class teachers on a rostered basis and P & F and community notices. Photos highlight the activities of students during the previous week.

Parents are welcome to attend every assembly, liturgy and event happening at school. The school sincerely appreciates parents assisting in the classroom, canteen, fundraising and excursions.

In 2011, our school continued its outreach program maintaining Catholic charities with two community charities each year.

## OUR LEARNING COMMUNITY

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School is committed to providing the best possible education for its students. The school aims to develop the whole child spiritually, intellectually, physically, socially, emotionally and morally. The Australian Government mandates eight learning areas. As a Catholic School the Religious Education program is integral to student learning.

### **Learning and Teaching:**

As partners in Catholic education, we commit ourselves to our students by celebrating being Catholic in Australia, ensuring quality teaching and learning programs and inspiring hope, a love of learning and a positive vision for the future.

The staff of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School is dedicated, committed and very energetic. All staff members have a genuine love of children. They are an open, welcoming and cohesive team who build strong, quality relationships with students, parents and each other and contribute to a very supportive and collegial atmosphere.

The enthusiasm and willingness of staff to take on new approaches or programs is central to the professional growth of staff and improving student outcomes. Staff is encouraged to build professional capacity through quality professional learning. The Principal is proactive in encouraging discussion with staff members to provide support for quality classroom practice.

Staff members are actively involved in professional development programs directly linked with the educational needs of the children and the educational foci of the school. Regular staff and curriculum meetings are held which reflect both daily and longer term direction as well as whole day professional development experiences.

The school uses the Good News for Living Religious Education Curriculum, N.S.W. syllabi for all other key learning areas - the exception being ICT where the Tasmanian Curriculum is used. Specialist lessons include Music, Speech and Drama, Japanese and Physical Education. Teachers plan collaboratively each week during block non-instructional sessions.

Students begin each day with a two hour uninterrupted literacy block and one hour numeracy block. The literacy block is made up of a one hour reading and one hour writing block.

Within the classroom children are involved in individual, small group and whole class activities. Our approach to children with special needs is to identify those students of concern, involve specialists when necessary and prepare specific programs to address the needs of students. Our approach is inclusive and programs are overseen by the class teacher, Learning Support teacher, Principal and Catholic Education Office personnel. Parent input is seen as vital with communication with parents occurring regularly. This enhances the teaching and learning program within the classroom and gives students the opportunity to receive one-on-one or small group assistance.

Integrated Inquiry Units are a focus each term. These Inquiry Units have the relevant syllabus documents as their source. Leadership Values Programs, Peer Support, Grade 6 Camp and Inter-school sport are also part of the mandated curriculum at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School.

At Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School we believe the learning process begins with assessment. This provides the basis for planning student learning. Our Lady of Mercy uses a wide variety of assessment strategies which include whole school standardised testing which is based on stages of

development and syllabus guidelines, formal assessment such as teacher observation, student self-assessment and anecdotal records. The school also has an extensive formal assessment structure which includes observational tests, running records, portfolios of student work and numerous other strategies. The combination of formal and informal assessment ensures that the learning needs of students are regularly identified and monitored and specific learning programs are developed. Testing occurs regularly throughout the year. Our Lady of Mercy is actively involved in NAPLAN testing for students in grades 3 and 5 (Government mandated testing) and PIPS (Performance Indicators for Primary School) testing in Prep.

### **Literacy and Numeracy**

#### **NAPLAN results:**

NAPLAN assesses student performance in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions (Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation) and Numeracy.

- Year 3 students at OLOM performed at or above the Tasmanian cohort in Reading, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation (significantly above), and Numeracy (significantly above).
- Year 3 students at OLOM performed at or above the Australian cohort in Reading, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation, and Numeracy.
- No Year 3 student is below the National Minimum Standard in Spelling or Numeracy.
- Year 5 students at OLOM performed at or above the Tasmanian cohort in Reading (significantly above) and Spelling.
- Year 5 students at OLOM performed at or above the Australian cohort in Reading (significantly above) and Spelling.
- 87% of Year 5 students were above the National Minimum Standard in Numeracy, compared with 77% for Tasmania and 81% for Australia

We are now seeing the results of focussed strategies implemented over the past three years.

### **Targetted Programs**

Our Lady of Mercy has a number of students who receive Equity Funding for Targetted Programs. Identified students benefited from the extra funding and received additional support in the classroom through individualised programs and by working with teacher aides. The teacher aide role is to assist the teacher with intervention programs for students in the area of literacy and numeracy. Teacher aides take a significant role in supporting teachers with the implementing of Individual Education Plans for students with special needs. They also implement the funded speech programs. The professional relationship which exists between teachers and teacher assistants has contributed in a significant way to the enhancement of student outcomes at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School.

### **Health Promoting Programs**

In addition to weekly Physical Education sessions, all students are involved in swimming, athletics and cross country programs as well as school, regional and state carnivals. Grades 4, 5 and 6 students have the opportunity to play hockey, football, netball and soccer during the Friday sport program co-ordinated by the Northern Midlands Primary School Sports Association.

Daily Physical Education sessions are held each morning with our Grade 6 students conducting the sessions.

Kinder to Grade 6 students have a nutritional 'fruit break' each morning at 10.00 a.m. Having a short break, during which students are invited to eat healthy fruit, helps their concentration across the two hour Literacy Block.

A 'no hat, no play in the sun' policy operates in Terms One and Three, when students are most at risk.

### **Achievements Across the Curriculum**

Students from Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School presented both solo, duet and choir items in the Devonport Eisteddfod and gained considerable recognition for their outstanding efforts.

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School is proud of its involvement in the ANZAC Day parade and service. Led by school student leaders, students from Kinder to grade 6 represented the school by marching and attending the ANZAC Day service and laying a wreath. Our whole school community showed its respect by holding a school-based ANZAC service and attending an Anzac Day Service at the Deloraine Community Centre led by Deloraine High School Students.

Grade 5 and 6 classes are involved in annual multiple day camps. Excursions are encouraged to support and enrich the curriculum from Kinder to Grade 6.

At the whole-school assembly held each fortnight students receive MJR (Make Jesus Real) certificates and Class Awards. Examples of positive role models are recognised and rewarded.

At the end of the year Presentation Evening recognition is given for Religious, Academic, Sport / P.E, Music, Drama, Japanese, Community Spirit and Personal Achievement.

School Assembly begins with acknowledging the Original Custodians of the land on which our school has been built and concludes with the National Anthem.

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Primary School in 2011 continued to provide opportunities for students to enhance I.C.T. skills and competencies. Laptops and Desktop computers were purchased so as to improve the computer/student ratio. New software

programs were also purchased for use by all students. New laptop computers allow students easy access to research-based inquiry learning, individual programs, skill development and published final copy. Computer technology is integral with learning. Our library is spacious and well-stocked.

An I.C.T. Coordinator Role and a Technology Aide position were created to advance the integration of I.C.T. across the curriculum.. The Coordinator Role carried curriculum and technical responsibilities and the Technology Aide carried technical responsibilities only.

### **Student Leadership**

Student leadership is encouraged and fostered. Formal positions of leadership included school captains and vice captains as well as house captains. School leaders were given opportunities throughout the year to develop leadership skills and individual gifts and talents were developed.

### **School Leaders elected by their peers in 2011 were;**

#### **Term One**

**School Captains:** April Quigley and Stan Tyson

**Vice Captains:** Drew Gardner and Chey Graham

**House Captains:** Drew Gardner, Stan Tyson, Oliver Smith, April Quigley, Joshua Cruse and Chey Graham

#### **Term Two**

**School Captains:** Ethan Hight and Joshua Cruse

**Vice Captains:** Drew Gardner and Ashdyn Heathcote

**House Captains;** Isabel Papik, Annabella Skipper, Ashdyn Heathcote, April Quigley, Joshua Cruse and Thomas Crowden.

#### **Term Three**

**School Captains:** April Quigley and Oliver Smith

**Vice Captains:** Annabella Skipper and Talia McPhillips

**House Captains:** Joshua Cruse, Chey Graham, Ashdyn Heathcote, April Quigley, Drew Gardner & Stan Tyson

In Term 3, Grade 5 students were selected to attend a Caritas Day with other northern Catholic school students. This day provided an experience for those students in being a leader.

The staff at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School is deeply committed to caring for each child and recognises the uniqueness of each.

The school continued to provide opportunities for students to develop capacity in the area of leadership. The majority of Grade Six students were exposed to leadership experiences through leadership days, sporting carnivals and interaction with other students.

In 2011 the Grade Six students also focused on 'giving back' to the school and embarked on working in classrooms across the school on a roster basis. This involved working one-on-one with students in Kindergarten with I.C.T., listening to Prep students read and learn their MIOOW sight words and working with all students in daily P.E sessions. This strategy provided some very encouraging outcomes.

### **Assessment and Reporting**

Fundamental to improving student outcomes is determining where students are and monitoring their progress carefully. At Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School, a whole school literacy and numeracy assessment timetable is maintained, producing a more coordinated approach to the identification and diagnosis of learning needs. This enabled appropriate early intervention strategies and programs to be put in place to assist students in their literacy development.

A variety of assessment tools, tests and screeners are used. Assessment in the early grades is now comprehensive and includes:

- Auditory Processing Assessment.
- Phonological Awareness Screen.
- Expressive Language and Articulation Screen.
- P.I.P.S.
- Kindergarten Developmental Checklist.

Reading Comprehension and Mathematics are tested regularly at all levels. The assessment includes both teacher initiated assessment tasks as well as standardised tests.

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School formally reported to parents in the mid-year and at the end of the year using an A - E rating to report achievement of its students. This form of reporting is in accordance with a mandate of the Australian Government. A to E ratings are not used for Kindergarten or Prep.

Parents were formally invited by the School to attend Parent/Teacher Interviews following the issue of the Mid-Year Achievement Reports.

Students in Preparatory began and finished the 2011 year with Performance Indicators in Primary School (P.I.P.S.) screening to assess progress in their first formal year of schooling. The National Assessment Program in Literacy is administered to all Australian students in Grades 3, 5, 7 and 9 in May each year.

### **PASTORAL CARE**

The Mission Statement of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School states: 'We value a Christian lifestyle with a commitment to care, service, respect for the justice and compassion within our school community and society in general.'

We believe all children have the right to grow and develop in an atmosphere of love, belonging and security.

Teachers and parents sharing this vision, co-operate in a climate of mutual support and respect.

'We value a strong sense of community and encourage full involvement of parents, students and staff in the life of the school.'

The school mission statement is reflected in many real and visual ways. We have an open-door policy whereby parents are always welcome to come and discuss the success and challenges of their children in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Students, teachers and parents speak and treat one another with respect. Staff build positive relationships with students.

Behaviour Support is premised by students being accountable for their own actions and decisions. There is out-of-school support for those students with ongoing problems, using local community expertise where possible. There is zero tolerance to fighting and bullying with set procedures and consequences. The school believes in working in partnership with parents to support students.

A buddy system between the older and younger students develops positive relationships. Opportunities arise in the educational, social and religious settings.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

2011 saw Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School continue with the School Improvement process. School Improvement is a process of ongoing development that builds on strengths and addresses issues and needs in a strategic manner. It involves "a process of analysis and evaluation of information and the use of that information in a systematic way to widen understanding and to plan programs and school practices" (Mitchell et al, 2002:267). This program is school-based, learning centred and future-oriented.

Key targets in 2011 included:

1. Further embedding of the Mercy charism into the life of the school.
2. Use of relevant data from National, Standardised and in-school to continue improvement of student outcomes in Maths and English.
3. Initial review of Literacy / spelling component of the curriculum.

## School Improvement Goals Met.

### ENROLMENT

Class structures in 2011 were:

Kindergarten – 16 students

Preparatory – 26 students

Grade 1 – 18 students

Grade 2/3 – 16 + 9 = 25 students

Grade 3/4 – 18 = 8 = 26 students

Grade 5/6 – 13 + 13 = 26 students.

There were 91 families represented in the school. Just over half of the student population was drawn from the regional areas around Deloraine with the rest coming from the town of Deloraine.

The Enrolment policy is in accordance with the TCEC guidelines, with the guarantee of a place for every Catholic student seeking enrolment. In Term 1, Kindergarten students attended school for three full days. All other students attend school fulltime.

The average attendance rate was 93% for Prep - Grade 6 students.

Our teaching staff comprises experienced professionals whose qualifications enable them to be fully registered with the Tasmanian Registration Board. There were 11 teaching staff and 11 ancillary staff members. The average attendance rate of teachers was 83%.

The Leadership Team was comprised of the Principal and Assistant to the Principal: Religious Education/Learning and Teaching.

The four teacher aides at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School are dedicated and highly skilled. They liaise closely with teaching staff, Catholic Education Office personnel and specialists.

Staff also includes a secretary, assistant secretary, Utility officer, OH&S officer and cleaner. These roles have differing hours of employment.

We are fortunate to have two Sisters of St Joseph living in the parish. Sr Maria Goretti and Sr Virgil are very supportive of the school.

The Parish Priest fosters active participation of all our students in the Faith life of the school and has developed a positive relationship with both staff and students. Father Terry Yard is a member of the School Board of Management.

## SERVING OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY in 2011

### **Leadership:**

Mrs Trish Cashman - Acting Principal, Terms One and Two

Mrs Josephine Craddock – Principal

### **Teachers:**

Miss Errin McDonough – Kindergarten

Miss Pauline Denman - Preparatory

Miss Dianne Murray – Grade 1

Miss Michelle Donohoe – Grade 2/3

Miss Catherine Digney – Grade 3/4

Miss Alisha Newman – Grade 5/6

Mrs Catherine Digney - Coordinator for Special Learning Needs,

Mrs Amelia Reynolds – Music, Speech and Drama and Choir

Mr Nick Cramp - Physical Education

### **Teachers Assistants:**

Miss Vicki Donald

Mrs Anita Bowman – Kindergarten

Mrs Carol Lyall

Mrs Amanda Maude

Mrs Georgie Warham-Kindergarten

### **Administration:**

Mrs Anne Stewart - School Secretary and Finance Officer

Mrs Katie Gardner – Administration and ICT

### **Services:**

Mr Pat Coleman – Groundsperson/Security

### **School Board Membership 2011:**

Chair – Mr Scott Newsum

Vice Chair - Mr Michael Sullivan

Secretary - Mr Andrew Smith.

Treasurer – Mrs Simone Arnold

Members – Michael Sullivan, Andrew Smith, Mrs Simone Arnold, Father Terance Yard and Mrs Josephine Craddock.

### **Parents and Friends Executive Committee**

President –Mrs Karen Claridge-Robins

Vice President - Gina Sullivan

Secretary – Mrs Joanne Woolley

Treasurer – Mrs Karen Claridge-Robins

Canteen Coordinator – Mrs Nicki Atkins

Fair Coordinator – Mrs Leanne Edwards

Members: Mrs Nicki Atkins, Mrs Sharon Huett, Ms Leanne Edwards and Mrs Kylie Griffin.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School works hard at building a school community that is welcoming to all.

Local and globally focussed projects foster a sense of community and citizenship. These projects are nominated and led by staff and school leaders and undertaken throughout the year.

### **Kanangra Aged-Care**

All students have an opportunity to enrich their own lives and those in Kanangra.

Choral contribution by students to Deloraine Carols by Candlelight provided both valuable and welcomed support to those community projects and also showcased the excellent Performing Arts program provided by the school.

201 levy monies will be used to provide resources identified as needed by the school during the process of the Federal Government's 'Building the Education Revolution'.

Many initiatives at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School would not have been possible without the involvement of an army of volunteers who give dedicated time to supporting children and teachers in classrooms, at sport training and on excursions and camps. Not everyone is able to give their time to help out. The support and loyalty given by members of the school community is just as valuable in making Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School a happy and successful place of learning.

The school choir visits and students share their learning and lives with residents. Centacare

Before and After School and Vacation Care is provided by a caring team from Centacare. Children are engaged in quality and creative activities. This service is provided for all students over the age of four.

Each month Our Lady of Mercy provides a venue for parishioners for the Care and Concern Mass attended by the elderly of the parish. Each class has the opportunity to attend to support the parishioners.

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

**OUR LADY OF MERCY CATHOLIC SCHOOL  
SOURCES OF INCOME 2011  
Total Income \$1.7 million**

